



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

### Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

### About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>



LORD HARRY BELLAIR



600057384X







**LORD HARRY BELLAIR.**



# LORD HARRY BELLAIR.

*A Tale of the last Century.*

BY

THE AUTHOR OF "MARY POWELL."

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.



LONDON:

RICHARD BENTLEY AND SON,

Publishers in Ordinary to Her Majesty.

1874.

*The right of Translation is reserved.*

251 . b . 33 .





## CONTENTS TO VOL. II.

---

CHAPTER I.					PAGE
THE HAPPY MAN ... ..	...	...	...	...	1
CHAPTER II.					
MAY AND DECEMBER ... ..	...	...	...	...	27
CHAPTER III.					
TATTLERS ... ..	...	...	...	...	53
CHAPTER IV.					
EXPLANATION AND EXPOSTULATION ... ..	...	...	...	...	74
CHAPTER V.					
A SICK ROOM ... ..	...	...	...	...	94
CHAPTER VI.					
INDIGNATION ... ..	...	...	...	...	115

## CHAPTER VII.

	PAGE
SEPARATION... ..	137

## CHAPTER VIII.

MISTAKEN, FORSAKEN ... ..	159
---------------------------	-----

## CHAPTER IX.

OUT OF SIGHT, NOT OUT OF MIND ... ..	180
--------------------------------------	-----

## CHAPTER X.

THE BETTER PART ... ..	201
------------------------	-----

# LORD HARRY BELLAIR.

*A Story of the Last Century.*

---

## CHAPTER I.

### THE HAPPY MAN.

"My bosom's lord sits lightly on his throne."

HOME—*Douglas.*

WE left Mr. Oldworth with his face buried in his hands. Presently he started up, mentally exclaiming, "I will go to Bellarmine. He will rouse me out of this wretched state of mind; he will counsel me." But when he reached him, he found that Bellarmine wanted counsel of *him*.

“Joseph! you’re the very man I want,” cried he, eagerly. “My mother and I are at our wit’s end. Alfred has disappeared!”

Alfred Capel was a half-witted lad, heir to great wealth, whom Mrs. Bellarmine had charge of, at a very good premium.

“Indeed?” said Mr. Oldworth, with a pang at his own disappointment. “What can have become of him?”

“We can’t imagine. My mother writes to me in the greatest distress. Of course we must acquaint his relations, if we cannot recover him quietly, but that would probably lead to his being taken from my mother’s care. She wants me to go down to her at once, but I don’t see how I can, since I’m to preach this afternoon before the Lord Mayor — pshaw! before Miss Pomeroy.”

“And cannot get a supply?”

"Well," said Bellarmine with a very long face, "I might do so, I suppose, but—in fact, I'm halting between two courses—pulled two ways. Such an opportunity——?" and he looked at him inquiringly.

"Since you are engaged to preach," said Mr. Oldworth, "we will put the lord and lady out of the question—since you have work in the Lord's house—go, my dear friend, and may the Spirit speak through you—leaving me to supply your place to your mother as well as I can. Do you preach, and leave me to practise."

"You inestimable fellow!—Joseph, I'm positively ashamed—I'm not sure it's quite right."

"Pooh, pooh! it's quite simple. Don't let me waste time. Come to me in the evening that I may report progress."

"Oh, I'll run down to my mother in the evening. Better take her letter with you; it may suggest something. Joe, I wonder whether I'm in the way of duty."

"You have the Lord's message to deliver. Fix your thoughts on that now."

"I'm afraid I'm not in the cue for preaching my best."

"Ask and it shall be given."

"Yes, yes. Good-bye—good-bye, Joe. I almost wish we were in each other's places."

"Oh, no! You wouldn't if you knew what you were saying," burst from Mr. Oldworth, who hurried off without trusting himself to say more.

Again he had to go over the ground he had passed over in the morning, and a good deal beyond it, till he reached the pretty

green where Mrs. Bellarmine lived, at no great distance from his relations. He found her in tears ; she was greatly disappointed at not seeing her son, but allowed the cogency of his friend's excuses for him. She had taken every means she possessed to trace her young charge, but without success.

"The pond?" suggested Mr. Oldworth.

"The very thing I was thinking of," said she, with fresh starting tears. "He had a great attraction towards it, and may have fallen in. Would you—would you mind——"

"Having it dragged? Not in the least. I will have it done directly." On the green he met the sexton, whom he knew by sight ; and thought him a proper person to consult. He found he knew about the boy's



disappearance already. They were just conferring, like a couple of conspirators, when a third party interrupted them—Alfred himself!—his tall, lanky figure evidently unhurt, and his baby face all smiling.

“How now, sir? Where have you been?” said the sexton, authoritatively; while Mr. Oldworth felt immensely relieved.

“Rode in coach—don’t know where,” said Alfred. “No money to pay.”

“Did ever anyone hear the like of that now?” said the sexton, appealing to Mr. Oldworth. “How could the coachman take such a passenger?”

“I called him,” said Alfred, complacently. “I called ‘Hi! hi!’”

“Hah! I daresay you did,” said the sexton contemptuously; “a precious fright

you've given us. I should hope Mrs. Bellarmine would keep a sharper look-out after you in future."

He seemed to consider the sensation-scene had ended rather flatly; but Mr. Oldworth was well pleased to take the boy home after his little escapade, and to cry aloud as he entered the house, "All right, my dear madam! The lost sheep is found!" Mrs. Bellarmine came flying out to the door, and greatly astounded the lad by her embraces and tears.

They were all seated very comfortably at tea, when in walked Bellarmine. He started on seeing Alfred.

"Where have you been?" said he, almost savagely; which was just what the boy could not tell him. Tom exchanged looks with his mother and friend, and threw himself into a chair. She gave him tea,

which he drank with avidity, thereby scalding his mouth.

"How has it fared with you to-day, my son?"

"So-so," said Tom.

"How went your sermon?"

"Like Pharaoh's chariot-wheels I made a mess of it, I believe," said he, gloomily.

"Don't let us talk of it now, please. I'd rather think of something else."

Afterwards he accompanied his friend to the coach that he might talk with him.

"What a fuss about nothing there has been," cried he. "I expected as much as could be, to hear you had found the boy in the pond; and there was he stuck up smearing himself with bread and butter."

"The fright is over now, and we need not think any more about it."

"But I can't help thinking about it;

because it showed what was in me—showed me what a worm I am. Your words stick by me—‘Do you preach, while I practise.’ ”

“ Horribly conceited words. I heartily beg your pardon for them. Do forgive me, and think no more about it.”

“ Oh, yes ; I’ll forgive you, only I can’t forgive myself. And I made such a fool of myself in the pulpit to-day. I know I did. Wanted to do my best and did my very worst.”

“ You should have gone for help where I recommended.”

“ Well, I did. But still I felt such a worthless reed—such an empty vessel.”

“ That might be painful enough, but was better than being——”

“ Inflated like a great bladder with self-conceit ! I believe you’re right. I

know I am, sometimes. To-day I collapsed."

"Not in a marked manner, I hope?"

"Well, no; I didn't openly disgrace myself, but I was flat and tame: the Lord Mayor nodded; he could not have done so, you know, if I had spoken to his soul."

"Perhaps he nodded approval."

"I tell you no! he dotted off: just escaped snoring."

"Ah, those Guildhall dinners *do* make men heavy."

"Well, Joe, you must have it your own way. You'll tell me next that Eutychus slept under the preaching of St. Paul."

"You know that already."

"The fault was my own; it humbles me. In fact, I felt I had shirked my duty, in deputing you to an errand of, it might be, life or death; and so I went to church

in an abject spirit. Don't salve it over : I require the pain of this avowal. I not only thought it might advance my worldly interest to preach a striking sermon before the city magnates, but my vanity was concerned in what Miss Pomeroy might think. I ought not to have thought of her at all ; but though she was sitting out of sight, I had the hampering consciousness of her presence. I had only a glimpse of her before I came down here. She looked very grave."

"As she should look, after a sermon."

"Well, you may say what you will—I think she was disappointed in me. I know I was in myself."

"The more we analyze our thoughts and motives, the more dross we find in them."

"We do, we do!—and if *you* do, well

may I. What says the text? 'Even as silver is tried, seven times in the fire.' If the refiner of silver subjects the precious metal so many times to the tedious process—even till he sees his own face reflected in it—well may our sinful natures require the fiery trial again and again."

"And really, Tom, you have had no great trial yet."

"Well,—no, I haven't!" with his accustomed, joyous laugh.

When Mr. Oldworth reached home, he felt so jaded as to be inexpressibly desirous of silence, solitude, and rest. His annoyance may be conceived, therefore, at finding Levitt established quite at his ease in his own particular chair, with wine and biscuits before him.

"Joe! how are you? I'm glad to see you—'pon my soul, I am," cried Levitt,

starting to his feet and welcoming him as a host might welcome a guest. "I've won the day, my good fellow."

"I expected as much," said Mr. Oldworth with effort, and turning pale. "When is it to be?"

"Nay, that's rather too early an inquiry," returned Levitt, laughing as only the successful *can* laugh. "Not an hour later than I can help, you may depend."

"May she be happy! May you make her happy."

"Don't you wish *me* happy, man?"

"Of course I do; only it's wishing you what you are already. I wish it may last."

"Last? To be sure it will. Does that wish express a doubt?"

"Not in the least, Hal—not in the least. You are mutually attached; it is



natural you should be. I expect, I fervently hope, you will be blessings to each other."

"I'm a precious lucky fellow, I know. Joe, a word in your ear. She has fifty thousand pounds!"

"*Has?*" repeated his cousin, with repulsion. "What she *is*, is more to the purpose."

"Indeed it is, my dear fellow, only you know I'm not in a position to take a penniless bride. What I meant was, how generous of her and her father to entertain my proposals, being as I am."

"In *that* point of view. Does Mr. Tolhurst, then, know all?"

"Well, he does, and he does not," said Levitt. "I'll just tell you what happened, after the first emotions and so forth, had passed off. Lucy had gone off to dress,

you know—that was the plea. Then the old gentleman and I were left together. He took my hand and seemed as though he would never have done shaking it. I took his hand and made as though I would never have done shaking it. Then some broken sentences—we understood each other. At length, retaining my hand in his, ‘Hal, my young friend,’ says he, looking at me wistfully, ‘one question.’ I was all attention. ‘You’ll be good and true to my girl.’ ‘Sir, if there’s a sun in heaven.’ ‘Enough, enough. I know you will be. One word more. Are you in debt?’ ‘Over head and ears, sir!’ said I.”

“Well done!” exclaimed Mr. Oldworth.

“His countenance fell,” pursued Levitt, triumphantly. “‘Indeed, and to whom?’

he faltered. 'To you and to my Lucy!' I exclaimed. He hugged me."

"Hal! how *could* you?" cried Mr. Oldworth, flushing exceedingly.

"How could I what?" said Levitt. "'Twas the nearest thing in your life. The readiest turn imaginable. How would you have had me say? I *said* I was in debt; and if his face had not warned me of danger, I'd have made a clean breast of it; but 'twas impossible! you wouldn't have done it yourself. I defy you. I was as near shipwreck as possible; and, by the neatest little turn of the rudder, missed the rock."

Mr. Oldworth turned away and leant on the mantelpiece, too much troubled and displeased to speak. There was a pause. "You will have to do it, after all," resumed he. "You will have to do it soon or late."

"Do what? Give the old man a list of my debts? There you must excuse me."

"What do you mean to do?"

"Oh, something or other. You are my heaviest creditor, after all; and if you mean to come down upon me in the Shylock style, of course I must go to the money-lenders, who will hardly be more inexorable than my cousin."

"*Shylock?*"

"And, by-the-by, Macklin plays Shylock to-night," said Levitt, pulling out his watch. "Too late—I've been kicking my heels here so long. Well, I don't know I'm in the cue for him, neither, if you're going to turn upon me. Joe, I little expected this ill-turn of you, I must say."

"What turn?" said Mr. Oldworth.

"How have I turned upon you? I have

only said you must not be false to a confiding old man, who is going to trust you with his only child."

"How have I played him false, I pray you? Just tell me that. He asked me if I were in debt. I said yes. He asked to whom. I began with those to whom I actually felt most indebted at the moment; and spoke truth, I vow, in naming himself and Lucy."

"All this is quibbling."

"Quibbling? Had another man said that——" and Hal swelled out his chest and looked monstrous fierce.

"Big words pass by me as the idle wind which I regard not," said Mr. Oldworth. "Is it a literal fact that I am your greatest creditor?"

"Yes—no—maybe. I can't answer an arithmetical question in a moment."

"Would a thousand pounds cover your liabilities?"

"I think not. Why should I answer these questions?" said Levitt with an injured air.

"And yet *I* am your greatest creditor."

"True to a tittle. There are so many of them."

"Would two thousand cover them?"

"Decidedly, and leave a balance."

"On your honour?"

"On my sacred word."

"Hal, we are not very nearly related," began Mr. Oldworth, after a pause.

"Faith, but I think we *are*, though," said Hal.

"But we have no nearer kinsmen, I was going to say," pursued Mr. Oldworth, "and I would fain do you a kindness if I could."

"I'm sure I wish you would then."

"Especially as you are going to link your fate with that of the most amiable of her sex—the only child of a good father."

"Well, well, we know all that."

"You have left him under a mistake concerning your being in debt. The best way, therefore, will be to be in debt no longer."

"A Solomon, a second Solomon!" said Levitt ironically.

"Peace : be serious for a little, if you can. In order for me, or for any one to help you, you must consent to help yourself."

"I'm your man. Just show me how."

"Firstly, give me a complete schedule of your debts."

"And why, I pray you?" said Levitt, distrustfully. "To show Tolhurst?"

"To show nobody but myself. It must be faithfully drawn up; there must be nothing kept back."

"Well, I must say this is mighty unpleasant," said Levitt, drawing a deep breath.

"And if, as you say, the sum total exceeds not two thousand pounds, that shall be my wedding present, Hal, in addition to my cancelling your bond."

His heart swelled as if it would burst. "Joe, you're a trump! I always knew it," cried Hal rapturously. "Why did you do yourself such injustice, just now? I always said you were good at bottom."

"Let this suffice at present. I've had a very fatiguing day—I want rest and quiet."

"Ha, ha, ha! Would rather have my room than my company, hey? Your will



is my law, though I've had a fatiguing day, too; yet I'm as fresh as a bird, and could talk of Lucy for hours. I'll tell you what, Joe; let's go to the theatre at half-price, and see the farce. That will cheer you up in spite of yourself."

"I *hate* farces," cried Mr. Oldworth, fiercely.

"Joe! Joe! I couldn't have believed! —Well, well; good night, good night. I see you're a little out of sorts. If you repent your intended kindness—"

"I repent nothing. Bring me your schedule in the morning."

"Depend on me. *Bon soir*. I shall enjoy the walk by lamp-light through the streets to old Drury; for I've many things to think of."

So had Mr. Oldworth; but this night, he could only feel, and feel wretched.

Hour after hour, he sat in profound melancholy, without the mastery of his mind, in its habitual calm composure. When the candles burned low in their sockets, he went to bed, to lie awake, or succumb to troubled dreams.

Next morning, Hal, fresh and gay as a bridegroom, looked in on him at breakfast.

"What! with the coffee-pot still on the table?" cried he. "Surely we have changed characters. 'Tis you are late and I early this morning. I protest I've enjoyed the morning air; it has freshened me up so."

"Have a dish of coffee, Hal?"

"Well, I've no objection. Shall I help you to this broiled bone? No? Then I'll help myself."

"The schedule, Hal?"

"There it is—" tossing a scrawled paper across. "Didn't forget your wishes, you see. The man who would deserve the name of friend——"

What that man would or ought to do, did not transpire.

"And this is all?" said Mr. Oldworth, looking at him earnestly, after glancing over the paper.

"Now, Joe, did I say so, or did I not? Where's the good of saying a thing twenty times? All? and enough too, I think."

"Yes," said Mr. Oldworth, checking a sigh. "Then, there's what I promised you."

"Joe, this is really munificent. I'm at a loss to express——"

"Don't express anything. It will only embarrass me."

"No, but really—a thing of this sort

should not be done in a corner; it should be bruited abroad. Men should know what you are."

"Hal, no more of this."

"Mr. Tolhurst, above all others—"

"Say nothing to Mr. Tolhurst."

"What! not tell him you've covered my liabilities?" said Hal, joyfully.

"By no means," said Mr. Oldworth, peremptorily. "Things between friends are not to be made common talk of. Mr. Tolhurst understood you to be unincumbered. Well, now you *are* unincumbered; at least, you will be so, directly you apply that cheque to the purpose for which it is given—which I beg of you to set about without loss of time."

"You need not urge me to it, for it will be the greatest satisfaction I can conceive, next to seeing Lucy."

"You will attend to this first, I hope ; nay, I recommend."

"Depend on it, directly I have paid my devoirs at Chiswick."

"Hal, I not only recommend ; I enjoin."

"Pooh, pooh ! my dear Joe, my tailor is in bed, and I should have to kick my heels in his parlour if I went now. *Au revoir.*"

And gaily waving his farewell, Levitt departed, humming a song as he ran downstairs. Mr. Oldworth covered his eyes with his hand.

## CHAPTER II.

MAY AND DECEMBER.

"That time of year thou mayst in me behold,  
When yellow leaves, or none, or few, do hang  
On the bare trees."

"PROMISES still made, still broken," murmured Lord Harry, peevishly, as he finished reading a letter from Mary, bearing the Cheltenham postmark. "How they are enjoying themselves! How every trifle amuses them, without a regret for those at a distance. Surely, there is something selfish in that. Why cannot I be there too? The passing figures that amuse them would amuse me. Vain, vain . . . The

journey is an insuperable obstacle; and, even if it were not—Well, there is a time for all things—a time to be young, to amuse one's self, and forget others. A time to be old, to find amusement difficult, to feel forgotten."

A loud peal at the house-bell. In another minute or two, Sorel announced "Mrs. More."

Instantly Lord Harry was his company self. "My dearest creature," cried he, making as though rising to meet her, while the brisk, benevolent, intelligent lady approached him so nimbly as to prevent the necessity of his actually advancing one step—"This is kind—this is gracious—this is like yourself," taking both her hands, and pressing them most tenderly.

"Why, I should be the most ungrateful of mortals, my lord," returned she,

gaily, "if I neglected to come in person to thank you for your inestimable gift."

"Gift? hey? what?—Oh, I recollect. The presentation-copy—Ha, ha! Not a word of thanks, not a word. I sent you what you valued and I did not."

"Fie for shame, my lord! You make yourself out much worse than you are. You, of all men in the world, would not be so ill-bred as to give me a worthless present."

"Worthless? no; only——"

"And besides," interrupted she, "you have enriched it with such a precious autograph—such a flattering compliment, if it were but true."

"If that be not a challenge for one, I know not what is," cried he. "Flattery, quotha? You may be a saint, and I as great a sinner, Miss Hannah; but I should



be worse than I am, if I had writ one word of flattery on the fly-leaf of a Bible."

"Then I accept the kind words as the sincere, though too indulgent estimate of a dear friend," said she; "and will try to act up to it. How do you find yourself, my lord?"

"So-so—very so-so." And the opportunity was too tempting to be lost, of pouring a string of valetudinarian complaints into her sympathetic ear: in the midst of which, however, he stopped short, saying, "I bore you."

"You quite mistake," said she. "What interests you, interests me. What is painful to you, I cannot hear with indifference."

"You good creature!" exclaimed Lord Harry. "There really are some unselfish people in the world."

"Some? yes, a great many more than cynics think," returned Mrs. More.

"Ranking me of their crew, I know. I am no cynic, but yet I have seen something of human life."

"And your summing-up is—"

"All is nought, Hannah!"

"Why, you bear direct testimony to the truth of Holy Writ," said she, alertly.

"There is none good; no, not one—"

"Oh, that's in a different sense."

"Prove it, my lord!"

"I can't prove what doesn't need any proof," said he, peevishly. "You may as well say, 'Prove that the sun shines.' Why, it *does* shine; it is shining now; and that's enough."

"Terse, as ever, but not quite so logical as you are sometimes. A truce to even the semblance of a difference, my lord.

What the Book says, you said. Is it absolutely necessary you should disagree always? There was another point of coincidence. You conceded that all are not selfish—”

“I think that was conceding a great deal. Present company excepted, nearly all are so.”

“Quite all, in a state of nature—even the youngest, the loveliest—”

He winced.

“All, in a state of nature. None, in a state of grace: not thoroughly selfish, understand me. The believer struggles, agonizes for unselfishness, though the old sin is ever cropping out. It constrains him to cry, ‘O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?’”

“True as if *not* gospel,” cried he.

“And the answer to the question immediately follows,” she pursued. “‘I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord.’”

“My dear Hannah, have you seen Mrs. Montagu lately?”

She bit her lip, but said, “No, my lord.”

“What a charming creature she is! What wit! what genius!” running on in her praises, precisely such as he knew or thought he knew his auditor could hardly listen to with unwounded ear, and yet actually saying what might justly be Mrs. Montagu’s due—*cum grano salis*. As if to compensate to himself for so much praise of any one (not a Beaufort) he next proceeded to satirize one after another of their mutual acquaintance, with so much truth and point that it was impossible to refrain from laughing first and scolding

him afterwards, which was just what he liked; it only whetted his sarcasms, which were neat as epigrams; and before time could be found to tax him with an unfair thrust, he said something else so genuine and so brilliant that the censure was escaped. Dearly did Lord Harry prize an appreciating auditor; one who could prize at its full worth every shining *mot*; who would remember it, and repeat it, never spoiling its point. Thus an hour passed delightfully to both; it was not without its alloy. He might disclaim flattery if he would, but he could delicately administer it; and yet leave a sensitive person to be ashamed afterwards of having swallowed it, and to doubt if he had not at the very time been ironical. He could stab,—no, prick; his humanity would not let him exceed that; prick just where he knew

the prick would be felt, and 'kiss the place and make it well' the next minute, if he cared a straw for the sufferer. He did care for Mrs. More; respected her very much; but did not always like the equality with which she, as an acknowledged *belle esprit*, dauntlessly stepped forward to meet him on his own ground, with his own weapons; and moreover the shield of faith which is able to quench the fiery darts of the wicked. *That* was his unacknowledged pique against her. Sometimes those self-same malicious little darts would provokingly be blunted against that mighty shield. Then he was angry with her for bearing it; and with it for sheltering her.

"I have a crow to pluck with you," said he. "How came you to leave me in the dark about 'The Manners of the Great'?"

“What ! could I suppose you so dull,” she alertly answered, “as not to detect me in whatever disguise ? ”

“Ah, ah, Mistress Hannah, you meant deceit and no less ; angel as you are. You angelics can do pretty things sometimes. I swear, if I did not now so hate writing, I would take pen in hand and defend religion against your insidious attacks, madam ! The cause deserves a sounder advocate. In those ‘Manners of the Great’ I could show you fifty weak places. What ! shall there be no distinction of persons ? I consider the fourth commandment the most amiable and merciful law that ever was promulgated—for the poor, ma’am ! The hard-labouring poor, and beasts of burden ; but, that it was intended for persons of fashion—oh ! oh !—”

And he attacked her so mercilessly and pretended to find it so impossible to understand her real meaning, that she said at length—

“Tell me, my lord, is it a proof of politeness to attack one’s intimate friend to one’s face?”

“Surely no,” he replied.

“Or to ridicule that friend’s literary production?”

“Again I say no.”

“Well then, the Bible is the book of my dearest Friend, and I claim your courtesy for it, if not your better feeling.”

“Oh, then there’s an end,” said he with a slight gesture of impatience; and as she rose to go, he did not endeavour to detain her, but contented himself with compliments that meant nothing.

Sorel, when he entered immediately



after Mrs. More's departure, was struck with something malign in the old lord's face; and quick as thought, darted over his own delinquencies, to see if anything of recent date could have given offence; but, acquitting himself, concluded that it was only from Lord Harry's inborn antipathy to womanhood neither young nor pretty. The expression passed off; because the feeling it sprang from did; but that transient look was stereotyped in Sorel's memory, and did not increase his love for his master. At chance intervals faces even the most impenetrable, of characters even the most reticent, draw up their blinds for a moment and throw open their windows, so as to give a clear view into what is within. It may be a man stealing a purse, it may be a man on his knees in prayer, it may be children at

play ; and quick !—the scene changes—the drop-curtain falls. When it rises, it is on something quite different ; but that transient glimpse is never forgotten, it leaves a permanent impression, like the seal on the wax. Our inner feelings are photographed oftener than we know.

The acute Lord Harry neither knew nor cared what Sorel was thinking. He got him to settle his sofa cushions, sent him away, and read Mary's letter again. "They will be in town on Monday," he muttered—"they will be in Queen Anne Street on Monday—and what if I make an effort to get there?"

The Beauforts were at this moment supremely happy—the Captain with money in his purse—Laura with half-a-dozen Sir Foplings around her, 'giggling and making giggle'—Mary, in the deep ecstasy of a

serious and reciprocal attachment. At Cheltenham they had found Colonel Dalmayne, who by this time had convinced himself there was no woman so superior and charming as Mary Beaufort. He eagerly renewed the acquaintance, improved his opportunities, and found no great difficulty in obtaining a heart that was almost his already. But Mary had a dignity which would not unsought be won ; and even with disengaged affections, had never been as approachable as Laura. Colonel Dalmayne felt his prize all the better worth winning ; it depended entirely on his making it appear that he merited it ; for there was no rival to awaken his jealousy. At that season there was a halo of happiness about them both ; they appeared their best for they *were* their best ; there was every reason why their

most amiable qualities should appear to the greatest advantage, and why every failing should be in abeyance. Mary had never been so *spirituelle* or so lovely; Colonel Dalmayne looked at her, listened to her with rapture: he thought how the world would admire and seek out his wife; but, for the present, he was glad to keep the world out of sight. “*Am* I then happy at last?” Mary inquired of herself with surprise. Her heart distrusting asked, “Can this be joy?”

Not a word of this to Lord Harry, of course; he only perceived an unwonted radiance of happiness in her letters, which dropped the name of Colonel Dalmayne incidentally among a host of other Cheltenham names—neither first nor last. She was happy, without him; and that was enough to give a feeling of isolation.

To London they came—they had taken a furnished house till their former one on the green should be vacant. There was going to be what was called a *Thé* in St. Anne's Street—a novel entertainment of one's visitors, of which the following is a contemporary account:—

“Perhaps you do not know that a *Thé* is among the stupid new follies of the winter. You are to invite fifty or a hundred people to come at eight o'clock; there is to be a long table, or little parties at small ones; the cloth is to be laid, as at breakfast; every one has a napkin; tea and coffee are made by the company, as at a public breakfast; the table is covered with rolls, wafers, bread and butter; and what constitutes the very essence of a *Thé*, an immense load of hot buttered rolls and muffins, all admirably

contrived to create a nausea in persons fresh from the dinner table."

This having been thought a pretty fashion to introduce, by the Duke of Dorset in Paris, where people dined at two, was idly imitated by the English who dined at six. Behold, then, Lord Harry—after having prepared for this renewal of his intercourse with society at the cost of as much preparation and exertion as a man would now take to go to the West Indies—successfully landed in Queen Anne Street, and snugly enshrined in his hostess's boudoir, where she assured him he might receive just as few or as many of the crowd in the adjoining rooms as he pleased. Her homage was very grateful to him—the little table served for him alone, wound him up; the softened music fell pleasantly on his ears; he liked to see 'the lights

fall o'er fair women and brave men ' again ; to receive the *petits soins* of the young and fair and the cordial greetings of a few old friends. At last he began to think he should have too much of this, before the Beauforts appeared ; what could make them so late ? what a smile of surprise Mary would give when she saw him ! And then he felt a little weary, restless, and peevish.

She came ; and all brightened to him in a moment ! How beautiful she looked, how becomingly she was dressed, what joy was in her countenance ! Laura too ! but she was soon called away to dance—the Captain ; but he went to cards. Mary, of her own accord, remained ; he was inexpressibly pleased at her according this grace unasked.

“ I cannot sufficiently express my sur-

prise and pleasure," said she, cordially, "at finding you here."

"Nor I my pleasure at seeing you again, my dearest girl."

"How well you are looking, Lord Harry!"

"I am truly thankful you think so, my dear; it is next best to being so."

"But surely you cannot look better, without being better?"

"The transient reflection of your own brightness, I believe, Mary. No matter; let me enjoy it while it lasts. And have you really been happy all this age, my princess?"

"All this age? No, I can't honestly say that," said Mary. "Part of the time I was very *triste* and mopish."

"The cause?" said he, lowering his voice anxiously.



"Oh, only the little worries of daily life," said Mary, laughing. "Sometimes one pound wouldn't go as far as two, you know; sometimes two jaded horses would not carry us over a long stage as fast as four fresh ones—things that happen to everybody, tease for the moment and are forgotten."

"Yes, yes," said he. "I know what all those things are, and how they plague one; but you, with your vivacity and spirit, would never let them affect you seriously."

"Oh, no. Then there was that foolish affair about the play, Lord Harry," and she blushed. "Quite a false step, you know."

"Yes," said he, returning her smile with quiet drollery, "quite a false step."

"And you were so very, very kind about it!"

"My dear angel, I had taken such a

false step myself. A fellow feeling makes us wondrous kind; especially when our fellow-culprit is young and fair and very dear and delightful to us."

"Ah, you are all goodness, as you always are. I don't want to think of it any more. Let us bury it in oblivion. I hope people have quite forgotten it."

"What an unreasonable wish! Forget anything done by *you*? Too much to expect, Mary!"

"You horrify me. I must do something worse to put it out of their heads."

"Yes, that will be best," said Lord Harry, laughing. "What shall it be?"

"I think I know," said Mary, gaily; and suddenly the colour rushed into her cheeks and mounted to her temples.

"My dear child, what is it?" said he, in a low voice.

"Nothing. I can't tell you now," said Mary, stooping for her glove.

"Where can you have a better opportunity? Here are we *tête-à-tête* except for the old fellow asleep in the corner. The incessant chatter and the noise of the fiddles prevent our being overheard. If you have anything to reveal to me, my dear child, certainly now is your time."

"What can I say to you, my kind, kind friend?" said Mary, dropping her eyes and edging a little nearer to him. You have always shown such a fatherly interest in me that I should be basely ungrateful to let you be last to hear, or to let you hear from others, what deeply concerns myself."

"You say true," said he, strangely perturbed.

"Go on."

"Cannot you guess what I find it so hard to tell?"

"Yes," he replied, with a pang, "you are going to marry," and he took her hand and pressed it. "*That* much I can divine; but I cannot tell nor imagine who has wooed and won my princess. No one worthy of her, I am certain."

"Ah, Lord Harry, you think of me so much too well. *Indeed* he is far cleverer and better in every respect than I am."

"And who, Mary—who is the happy he?"

"Dalmayne," she said, very softly; then, after a little pause, "You have seen him, I think?"

"Oh, what, that handsome fellow with black eyes and teeth as white as china?" said he, rather sharply. "Yes, Mary,

yes; I have seen him. Quite the man to please a lady's eye; and doubtless the man to captivate a lady's heart."

"When you know him more, you will think more of him, I'm certain," said Mary. "He's shy, though you would not think it."

"Shy? *He* shy? Ha, ha!" with a dissentient shake of the head.

"And downright afraid of you, Lord Harry—of your wit and your satire! He is profoundly impressed by you, I assure you."

"Well, well; I wish the young fellow joy of his good fortune; even if it infinitely surpass his desert, that shall be no drawback to my good-will, if he but make you happy, Mary!"

"Oh, he will, I'm convinced," said Mary, earnestly; and there was a pause. The minds of both were busy.

"How strange," she resumed, "that I should feel this relief in confiding to you what most would only entrust to a mother."

"My dearest Mary, be assured that I prize this confidence beyond the power of words to express."

"The feeling of your entire sympathy," said she, almost with tears in her eyes, "is so very delightful to me—beyond what I can find in any other; for my father, you know, is not one to expect it from; and dear Laura is very jocund and a little too pre-occupied."

"My dear child, be assured of my intense, my undivided sympathy. The minutest, commonest of your affairs have an interest for me—how much more, then, a thing which concerns the happiness of your entire life? So dear is your welfare to me that I own I am ready to be jealous

of the merits of whoever shall absorb you. May you be extremely blest, my dearest."

"Ah, Lord Harry!"

He was ready to weep with tenderness afterwards, when he recalled her looks and words.

## CHAPTER III.

### TATTLERS.

"Methinks already I your tears survey,  
Already hear the horrid things they say."

POPE.

"A SETTLED thing! a settled thing!"  
vehemently said Hecate to Hecuba in a  
whisper that was almost a hiss. "He took  
her hand and held it—I think he raised it  
to his lips—she smiled on him and put her  
handkerchief to her eyes. 'Tis a settled  
thing, rely on't."

"I tell you no," interposed a third  
party, in an emphatic undertone—"the old  
fellow sleeping on the fauteuil"—"it was



impossible to help hearig what was passing, and so I shifted my quarters as soon as I decently could."

"Well, and he said——"

"Oh fie, Lady Kitty! you would not have me betray secrets?"

"What you didn't mind overhearing couldn't be any great secret."

"But I could not help overhearing, and I changed my place as soon as I could; this I assure you, you are quite on the wrong scent."

"Oh, if you expect me to believe *that*," said Lady Kitty.

"I don't expect it; but it is nevertheless fact."

"What! when I saw him kiss her hand?"

"I thought you were not quite sure——"

"I'm confident he did!"

"Oh well, in the warmth of emotion

he may have done so—I'll answer for it, your hand has been kissed under similar circumstances?" She was going to deny it, but stopped; and he saw it, and smiled, and she saw the smile.

"Seeing is believing," said she, "whatever you may have heard." And next day, the report that Mary had accepted Lord Harry, again spread right and left; the objects of it being totally unconscious of its revival.

Once more in his town-house, Lord Harry thought he would remain there and enter a little into society, till his health again obliged him to forswear it. As he rolled home in his luxurious chariot, he thought with mixed pain and delight of his conversation with Mary. She was lost to him, then! but how dear her confidence was to him!—that she should seek *him*

sympathy in preference to that of any other. She should have it—he would manifest it; would draw her to him; he would take care they should cross each other's paths and have continual *tête-à-têtes*; the child cared for him; valued his opinion, his approval.

As Sorel met him in the hall, he saw unwonted light in Lord Harry's face, though he needed the support of his arm. "Soup and bed, Sorel," was his brief command.

"My lord, I am sorry to trouble you; but something rather unpleasant has happened?"

"What?" cried Lord Harry, stopping short.

"David, my lord, has absconded."

"Bless my soul—with spoons?"

"With nothing more, my lord, as far as

we can yet ascertain." For David had already committed a robbery, which Lord Harry had mercifully forborne to discharge him for, hoping, by overlooking it, to reclaim him. The boy had already, for many months, been taking a downward path. Loose associates in the servants' hall; familiarity with petty and sometimes gross frauds; an acquired taste for expensive pleasures, public amusements, dainties above his reach; an increasing love of gaming; an increase of false shame, combined to work the ruin of David. To make it more certain, his affections were lost to an unprincipled, heartless girl, who in reality cared nothing for him, but whose vanity led her to encourage and mock him by turns—sometimes driving him almost crazy by her slights, at others letting herself be bribed into more agreeable conduct

by presents he could not honestly afford. His remittances to his mother had long ceased ; he had since left off writing to her ; and now to buy this worthless Jenny trinkets, and to enable him to gamble, he borrowed, ran in debt, and at length committed a theft. It was but of a silver spoon and strainer ; the value of which, had Lord Harry known all the circumstances, he would have despised in comparison with the harm the youth had done to his own character. He *did*, in fact, act a humane and generous part by him ; the lad had gone astray in his service, under the influence of bad example, and in the absence of good example and advice ; but Lord Harry was hardly answerable for it ; what knew he of the private vices of his household ? The very day he heard of the theft, he let David go behind his car-

riage in his usual airing, considering his butler had, by his own showing, reprimanded him with sufficient severity. Perhaps; had he spoken to the boy himself he might have touched and saved him—who can tell? He knew not on what a precipice he stood; nor what unseen foes were tempting him.

It was all very sad. There was concern in the heart of Lord Harry that day, within the carriage; and there was a despairing sense of disgrace in the servant that stood behind it. David had never been one penny the richer for his theft; for the silver was missed before he had had time to dispose of it, and was found in his possession, which made it easy to hush it up. And now the lad had absconded, and had left no trace behind him.

This occurrence disagreeably took the

place of the pleasing images that had pre-occupied Lord Harry. He uttered one or two peevish expressions—declared there were some people one *could* not serve—and spoke of sending for a Bow Street officer in the morning. After which he took his soup and went to bed to sleep.

But, two days after, a messenger from his country-house came up with doleful intelligence. At dusk, the preceding evening, an under-gardener passing through the copse near the chapel, had found poor David hanging from a tree, suspended by the neck, and immediately cut him down but life had long been extinct. He must have quitted the house after the house-keeper had gone her nightly round, looking to the fastenings of the lower doors; for he had dropped from the library window, a dangerous height, when every one was

supposed to be in bed, and had fled without even taking his hat. Of course it was the talk of the green for some days. David's debts came to light; many had trifles to witness against him: this one had seen him drinking at a public-house when he should have been in church; that one had seen him betting. None knew the dread secrets of the poor lad's own heart; and none knew the pang of real pity felt by Lord Harry when he heard that one so recently in his daily sight had entered, unsummoned, 'that undiscovered country from whose bourne no traveller returns.'

When others spoke to him of it, a gesture, a word or two of annoyance, showed that he would rather not recur to the subject. To Mary only, he once for all spoke of it with feeling; and then he never alluded to it again.

---



Mary was at this time as happy as it was possible for her to be—happier than she ever was before or after. It was something more exhilarating than ‘the sober certainty of waking bliss;’ and the word certainty could hardly be applied to the futurity which lay in such a bright haze. But she did not aim to pierce it; her vague feelings were delicious, she was beloved by the man she loved; there was no obstacle interposed between them; she was raised in her own eyes by being the object of his choice, wooed with such deference and anxiety. He had not yet joined her in London, but would do so shortly: meanwhile the pleasure of correspondence made his absence very endurable; she was continually thinking of him, and discussing the future with Lord Harry. They met continually at soirées, where it

became a settled thing that Mary should sit beside him and take on herself the office of entertainment, which the hostess usually was very happy to be relieved of. The consciousness that he understood her on the one point uppermost in her thoughts, to which he only made casual and veiled allusions, made her prize his society. He took care to keep up the good understanding, but was not fond of alluding to Dalmayne; and for her part, she said almost nothing in her letters about Lord Harry; so that when the Colonel arrived in town, he was quite unprepared for the close intimacy between them, which broke on him unpleasantly enough. He had arrived a day sooner than he was expected; and on repairing to the Beauforts, found they had all gone out for the evening. This was contretemps the first; but the

servant gave him the name of their entertainer, and as she was a mutual friend, Dalmayne considered he had the privilege of the *entrée*, and, after a careful toilette, prepared to follow them.

It was one of those crushes in which some people glory. Having worked his way to the lower end of the reception-room, he there remained wedged in a genteel crowd. Amid the surrounding buzz, his ear was caught by a name that riveted his attention.

"Have you seen the Beaufort to-night? She never looked more lovely. Those pearls she wears are not whiter than her neck."

"*Roman*," with contempt.

"Roman? I concluded they were a homage from her old lover."

"They may be—otherwise, of course,

she would never have genuine ones. Such polished, even rows would be almost priceless."

"Oh, but *he* wouldn't mind."

"Foolish old men don't mind what they do. I should not be surprised if she jilted him after all. It can't last much longer."

"She had better make hay, then, while the sun shines," with a horrid little laugh behind the fan. "This season will accelerate his descent. Who would have thought of his reappearing in society?"

"Oh, he must, you know, if he is to follow the lead of a young wife."

Colonel Dalmayne looked thunder and lightning; but as they had no clue to his feelings, one merely whispered to the other, "Who is that staring man? He looks quite *farouche*."

"Distinguished, too," returned the other.  
"A foreigner, I fancy."

Dalmayne now used his best endeavours to make his way to the upper end of the room; and there, taller by the head than the semicircle of persons he overlooked, he saw Mary, radiantly beautiful and happy, seated beside Lord Harry. Laura might have been there too, but he had no eyes, no ears, but for Mary; and what he saw and heard, coupled with what had just displeased him, gave him poignant pain. We all know what badinage is; this was badinage, and perfectly harmless; light pleasantries, and scintillations of wit, which Lord Harry desired nothing better than to listen to, now and then giving one or another of the *beaux esprits* a clever home-thrust. It was the current coin of society. Colonel Dalmayne would have enjoyed it

himself had he accompanied the Beauports and partaken of it from the first. As it was, he was out of patience and out of temper; he had failed to catch Mary's eye; and was gnawing his lip with vexation when she suddenly caught sight of him. What a change came over her in a moment! Her eyes and cheeks glowed, as she half rose and held out her hand, which he unceremoniously pressed forward to take. He kissed it; there could be no mistake; sat down by her on the side remote from Lord Harry and looked around supreme. If Mary was startled by him, she nevertheless felt proud, flattered, and happy. Lord Harry and he said polite things to each other, personal inquiries of the usual kind were exchanged; and the semicircle of chatterers fell back and dispersed; tacitly admitting him to be

master of the situation. Who, then, was this distinguished stranger, one asked another, who claimed the freedom of an acknowledged lover? He had been so long abroad that he was not generally known in London circles. The carriage of his head, his easy, graceful attitudes, were those of high-bred ease; but he could repel familiarity by a look. And somehow, that eagle eye was just now so unquiet and flashing that no one cared to come within his range, or to utter any mediocrity in his presence; and so the touch-and-go dialogue that had been so pleasant was suddenly congealed; no efforts of Mary's could restore it. Turning to Dalmayne with playful reproach, she said, in a low tone, "What made you come in looking so *dolcemente feroce*?"

"Did I?" said he. "I knew not how

I looked ; but I know I felt monstrously cross at finding my own particular treasure absorbed by others."

"Your own particular treasure has a *duty* to others which she must fulfil."

"Humph ! the duty seemed a pleasure in this instance."

"What a good thing when we make pleasures of duties !"

"The only duties that some people care to fulfil."

"Children, you are very epigrammatic," said Lord Harry, who did not at all like playing second. "Will any one be good enough to call some of my people? A thousand thanks, Colonel," as Dalmayne rose with alacrity to comply with his request. "Just ring that bell twice. My people will know the signal," and he leant back almost regally, looking superior down



on the follies he had abjured, but still clung to in his heart.

Sorel, handsomely dressed in black, entered at a side door, noiselessly as a ghost, won his sinuous way to Lord Harry, raised him, and gave him the support of his arm to the door, the company falling back as if for royalty. And he acknowledged their courtesy by gentle bows and smiles to one and another—most of whom never saw him again, and tried to remember how he looked and what he said long afterwards.

At the same time, Mary obeyed the summons of her chaperon, and Colonel Dalmayne no sooner found himself without a rival beside her, than he had to attend her to her friend's chariot, which, alas ! he was not invited to enter.

"When shall I see you?" said Mary eagerly, as they went downstairs.

"To-morrow, early."

"What shall you call early? Twelve o'clock?"

"Yes, if lap-dogs give themselves the rousing shake at that hour."

"Oh, we always breakfast at nine; it is one of papa's old-fashioned habits."

"I will wait on you, then, between twelve and one."

"I will wait *for* you, then, between twelve and one. You have not seemed yourself to-night," added she, in a low voice.

"Well, that is hardly surprising," said he, with quickness.

"Hardly surprising? Why?"

"I'll tell you to-morrow."

They were now in the cloak-room.

"You alarm me! Do tell me to-night."

"No, no. This is no place."

"You will rob me of sleep."

"Not quite that, I hope. We'll have a good talk to-morrow."

"I can't imagine what about," said Mary, uneasily.

"I have as little inclination as you to defer it; but you see the fates are against it."

He handed her into the carriage with scrupulous politeness.

"Be sure you keep your word," said she anxiously, from the window.

"About to-morrow? I never break engagements."

"What a handsome man he is!" said Lady Juliana as they drove off. "What was it all about?"

"I know as little as you do," said Mary. "He seems to have something on his mind."

"You did not expect him till to-morrow, did you?"

"No."

"People should not come before they are expected. It is very awkward and inconvenient sometimes."

"Ah, but his coming was neither awkward nor inconvenient to *me*," said Mary.

"I was delighted."

"You will hear all about it to-morrow," said Lady Juliana.

## CHAPTER IV.

### EXPLANATION AND EXPOSTULATION.

*Cassius.* "That you have wronged me, doth appear in this."

MARY, lovelier than ever in her simple morning toilette, awaited her lover with anxiety and impatience. "Surely papa has been meddling with this pendule?" said she; but no; comparison of watches exonerated him from the charge.

"You ought to be very much obliged to papa for walking off without requiring a hint," said Laura.

"Papa is not fond of meeting Dalmayne, I think," said Mary.

"To be sure not. He does not like talking over money matters."

"What is there to talk over?" said Mary. "He told him at the first word that we were penniless girls—throwing out his hands, this way."

"Why need he have spoken in the plural? I call that gratuitous."

"Of course, if I am, you are."

"That does not follow. I might have a fairy godmother rich as Croesus. Hark! the Colonel's knock! I vanish to practise the guitar."

Mary had heard the step before the knock. He came in, with a quick, apprehensive look that would read her soul at a glance. "Well, what does my face say?" said she, laughing. "Guilty or not guilty?"

"You are determined to plunge in *medias res*," said he, retaining her hand.

"Oh, of course I want to know whether I am a prisoner at the bar, or acquitted?"

"If you are at the bar it rests with you to plead guilty or not guilty."

"*Of what?* I must know that first."

"Really, Mary, if you look at me in that steady, fearless way, I shall think you either a miracle of hardihood, or very ill used."

"The last, rely on it," said Mary. "I feel guilty of nothing whatever. I am as innocent as a lamb, a dove, a chicken, or a new-born baby. My conscience has no burden whatever. My constant study is to be happy and make others happy."

"You take very high ground," said Colonel Dalmayne.

"Because I *am* on high ground. Can you say as much?"

"Why, no, indeed. I should be afraid of saying half a quarter as much."

"There, now," said Mary, "and yet you talk of placing me at the bar."

"People may have different ways of estimating themselves," said Dalmayne, "as well as characters to be very differently estimated. I, now, was taught from a boy to order myself lowly and reverently to all my betters—"

"Oh, my goodness! and do you mean to say you *do* so?"

"And that self-praise was no recommendation."

"How does that apply? The question was of 'guilty or not guilty.' I said, 'decidedly *not*,' in a general way; because you alleged no guilt in particular."

"Oh come, Mary, with all your drollery



and badinage, I will make a direct charge against you if you dare me to it."

"To be sure I do," said Mary. "I dare you to it this instant."

"How came I to find your name coupled as it is with Lord Harry?"

"Coupled as it is? you alarm me," said Mary, changing colour. "Do explain how it is coupled."

"Entering the drawing-room last night, I heard your names coupled as lovers."

"Why, I never knew anything so absurd," said Mary, in fits of laughter. "A lover past seventy?"

"Absurd as it seems to you, the people who were talking of it seemed to think it by no means incredible—they spoke of it almost as a settled thing."

"And you could really pay attention to such absurdity—such inane rubbish?"

Really, Colonel Dalmayne, I had thought better things of you."

"But, Mary——"

"Not a word. It is you who are at the bar now; and self-convicted. I am sorry I did not know on what baseless folly you could found a serious charge."

"But hear me, Mary—you really must. There was no getting away from these people. I was wedged in the crush."

"You should have stopped your ears like Princess Parizade; and given them a withering look."

"I did, but——"

"You did? and they were *not* withered? Then I know who they must have been," cried Mary. "Two old ladies, withered to mummies already, perfect scarecrows, with cracked voices."

"That certainly answers their description."

"Oh, I was certain of it. Dear Colonel Dalmayne, those women have done me a world of evil already, with their envenomed tongues. Why they should bear me such malice I have no idea, for I never wronged them in thought, word, or deed."

"Dear Mary, youth and beauty are sufficient offence."

"Well, I really know of none, except that they are not happy themselves, and hate to see others happy."

"But why—why lay yourself open to the remarks of such wretches, of whom I fear there are too many prototypes in the fashionable world?"

"I declare I've done nothing! I'm altogether without reproach. Now, do

tell me, word for word, what they said."

"Oh, I can't recollect."

"I'm sure you can if you try. You are afraid of hurting my feelings. They are much more hurt already by your taking umbrage at me."

"'Pon my life," said he, after a pause, "I can't speak as if I were in the witness-box. One of 'em began by praising your looks—said your pearls were not whiter than your skin."

"No harm in that, surely?" said Mary.

"And the other said your pearls were Roman."

"That they're not!" cried Mary, eagerly.

"Well, the other seemed to think they were not, and said they were doubtless a homage from your old lover."

"Did she know I had a new one?" said Mary.

He could not help laughing, but said, "Dear Mary, this really is no laughing matter, for it is not well for a woman to be talked of."

"In that way, I grant you," said Mary. "Oh, how shall we get them to cease talking?"

"By giving them nothing to talk about, I think."

"My dear Dalmayne, as if *that* would be of the least use!"

"Well, perhaps not; only they might talk of somebody else."

"At all events, I am glad we have had this explanation. It is always so much better to speak things out to one another than to let them rankle."

"Yes, it is. Well, well, Mary, make

all the excuse for me you can. Forgive a disappointed man who, instead of having a quiet evening with the woman he adored, found her surrounded by a crew of empty foplings."

"Never give me anything worse to forgive," said she, with a charming smile.

"As for Lord Harry——"

"The idea of Lord Harry's pearls being taken for Roman!" cried Mary, laughing.

"He *would* be amused!"

"*His* pearls?" said Dalmayne, stopping short.

"The pearls he so flatteringly gave me—saying that he had bought them for his intended bride, I know not how many years ago, and had been unable all these years to find any one good enough, fair enough to wear them. I have been long-

ing so to tell you of it. I will fetch them."

"Stop!" cried Dalmayne, abruptly, as she was running off. "I beg you will spare yourself so useless a trouble."

"The trouble is a pleasure."

"But I'm no judge of pearls. I don't want to see them. I'd rather not see them. In fact, Mary, I am altogether sorry you should have accepted a present so costly from a man who is known to admire you."

"Poor Lord Harry? old Lord Harry!" said Mary. "You don't mean to say you can be jealous of *him*?"

"Faith, but I do, though," said the Colonel.

"This is too absurd," said Mary. "A man old enough for my grandfather."

"Ay, but people do strange things

every day," said Dalmayne, "and I'm not so absurd neither; just as if," cried he, with a sudden burst of temper, "you could not have waited for *me* to give you pearls, if you were desirous of having any."

"That would certainly never have occurred to me to do," said Mary coldly. "Well, I'm sorry for this. It seems that without in the least intending or suspecting it, I may continually give you offence."

"Only by doing things no man of sensitive feelings would like."

"How so? You were offended by the causeless sarcasms of two notorious back-biters. That was not owing to me; your quarrel lies with them, if with any; and justly too, if it were worth taking up, for they were as mistaken about Lord Harry as about the pearls. A very old friend,



who enters into all my feelings, shows his fatherly affection for me by giving me a necklace. Your quarrel lies with him, if with any."

"Pardon me; with you, I think, for accepting them. Fatherly?" repeated Dalmayne with strong emphasis, "I certainly never knew your father use such words, looks, and tones to you as Lord Harry used last night."

"Well, Dalmayne, if you are determined we shall quarrel, I cannot help it," said Mary, with a look of weariness. "Very sorry I certainly am, all the same. After looking forward as I have, to this interview, with such pleasure—and for it to be so wholly different from . . . " and she put her handkerchief to her eyes.

"I can't stand this, Mary," said he,

softening. "If you have recourse to tears, I'm a beaten man."

"Recourse, indeed," said Mary, actually crying a little, but feeling all the same the advantage of her being able to do so. "To be misunderstood so completely is what I did *not* expect."

"Now, Mary, do refrain. You are tearing my heart to pieces."

"As if you had one," said she, laughing through her tears.

"Oh well, if you can laugh again, you won't die this time."

"Die? No, I hope not, indeed. Oh, Colonel Dalmayne, how *can* you be so abominable?"

"My dear angel, if you only knew how I was racked . . ."

"I allow no one to call me dear angel but Lord Harry," said Mary with mock

prudery. "At *his* age, there is no fear of its being misunderstood by sensible people."

"That wretched old Lord Harry," said Dalmayne. "What right has an old fellow like that to get himself up in that expensive style and come out to evening parties?"

"Poor old man, if you consider how he is cut off from 'all that should accompany old age.'"

"*He*, cut off? just otherwise, taking his own share and other men's too!—the pleasures of the young and the immunities of the old — 'honour, love, obedience, troops of friends,' aye, and of pretty women, who actually run after him, toady him, pet him, spoil him, throw themselves at his head, at his feet, into his arms, till he totters off, inflated with vanity and self-conceit like a great, big, gigantic . . . bubble!"

Laura at this moment entered the room,

looking very grave, and having waited till Dalmayne finished the above sentence, said deliberately, "Lord Harry has had a seizure."

"A what?" said Dalmayne, starting.

"A stroke—a fit. I don't know what it is called. He wants to see you, Mary."

"Bless my soul!" said the Colonel.

"Now then, Colonel Dalmayne, am I to go or not?" cried Mary with excitement. "Am I to obey the summons of an old man to his dying bed—an old man who has been kind to me, who prizes my regard for him, overpaying it with his own—or am I to deny his last request? Only say! I wish to know."

"Confusion!" said the Colonel.

"The servant waits," said Laura.

"I wait too," said Mary to her, "but you see the Colonel does not answer."

"You will not go alone, I suppose," said he, very crustily.

"Who can I take with me?" said Mary.

"Lady Juliana is in the carriage," said Laura.

"Oh, then, of course," said Dalmayne, looking relieved.

"Of course what?"

"Of course you may do as you like—as women always contrive to do one way or another."

"If the emergency were not pressing," said Mary, "I would take you to task for so uncivil a speech; but, in truth, Dalmayne, I am in great concern for my poor old friend, and am in no spirits for altercation. We part in kindness, I suppose?" holding out her hand.

"Of course we do," catching it and kissing it.

“All’s well. Let this little fracas be henceforth forgotten.”

And she hastened away, not ill pleased, on the whole, at having kept her ground pretty tolerably. But yet she had a consciousness that Dalmayne’s nature was deeper, more sensitive, more suspicious than she had been aware of, and that unless her future life were one of troublesome circumspection with regard to small things as well as great, it might be difficult to pass it happily with him.

Lady Juliana, who was one of Lord Harry’s many cousins, and who took a motherly interest in the Beauforts, was very glad when Mary came out in her cloak and hat and stepped into the carriage. As they drove off, she told her how he had been seized, while stooping to raise a portfolio which had slipped from his relaxing

grasp; and she feared his left arm was paralyzed. "He may not be carried off this time," she said. "People very often have three shocks at least till they have the last; but at his age, you know, and always so failing, he will never be his own man again, my dear." Then she went off to similar attacks of this and that old relative, that were perfectly uninteresting to Mary, except so far as they bore immediately on the present case, which, in Lady Juliana's hands, none of them appeared to do. She went on to say: "It is a pity, I think, he came up to London this time, for he was hardly fit for it; and late hours and excitement have been very bad for him. But one can but do what one likes best."

"Yes, indeed," said Mary, absently.

"And he was always very fond of society, though often unequal to it," said

Lady Juliana, "and people were very glad to see him again, you know, though he looked more dead than alive. I declare I was quite afraid something would happen to him while he was in my house, and felt quite relieved when he was gone. Of course his solitude must often try him very much, poor man, and if people don't go to him, he must go to them; and he has put people off so often that they have left off going to him as often they used to do; and then he fancies himself forgotten and neglected, which is a very dreary feeling, you know."

"Very," said Mary.

"Ten thousand pities he did not marry when he was younger," said Lady Juliana, looking at Mary, wistfully. "He would then have had some one to take care of him instead of being left to servants."



## CHAPTER V.

### A SICK-ROOM.

"Is Philip dead?"—"No, but he is sick."—"Pray, of what consequence is it to us whether Philip is sick or not?"—DEMOSTHENES.

MARY, unused to scenes of death and sickness, was awe-stricken when she saw Lord Harry almost as white and impassive as monumental marble, stretched on the bed to which he had been carried immediately after his seizure. The snowy linen around him, the absence of the conventional periwig with its great, disfiguring curls, supplied by a cambric handkerchief bound round his well-formed head—the attenuated

face and deathful expression—all forcibly struck her imagination; and as she knelt and kissed the cold hand lying listlessly on the coverlet, a tear of sympathy dropped on it.

Lord Harry was infinitely touched by the attitude, the kiss, and the tear; and he looked benignly at her, and faltered, “Bless you, my Mary; I thank you for coming; we must all come to this at last.” She strained her hearing to catch what he said; and as he evidently spoke with a great effort, she said, pressing his hand: “No need for words. We understand each other, you know.” Then, noticing the scrutinizing eye of the fashionable physician, on her, as he sat on the opposite side of the bed, she said firmly and distinctly, “Colonel Dalmayne knows of my coming. He was with me when I was sent for, and is deeply concerned for you.”

"May you be happy," said Lord Harry feebly, with a little twitch about the mouth, and he closed his eyes, which slowly moistened ; still leaving his hand in hers. Carefully were these words booked in the physician's memory, and quoted afterwards.

"He sleeps," he presently whispered softly ; and Mary then rose and noiselessly followed Lady Juliana from the room. They were both so much impressed by the scene that they did not attempt anything like conversation on their return.

Indeed this event cast a very perceptible shadow on all the Beauforts. The Captain made a point of daily inquiring of Sorel himself how Lord Harry was faring. Sorel had been much shocked at the seizure, and had betrayed emotion on the first signs of returning animation in his master, which

Lord Harry had noticed and felt grateful for. While the doctors were being fetched, he drew a diamond ring from his powerless hand with the other, and feebly gave it to him, saying, "For you, my good fellow; this is a stroke to us both."

Sorel laid his hand on his heart, and was most sedulous in his subsequent attentions. The confinement to the sick-room was sufficiently tedious for him to be glad to slip away and have a few minutes' talk with Captain Beaufort; but he let Lord Harry want for nothing, and was seldom out of his sight night or day.

Laura's *rôle* was to await her father's report and then disseminate it among her acquaintance, all of whom evinced curiosity to know what turn the illness was taking. It formed matter for idle talk all over the town; the newspapers kept it in sight;

and even bets whether he would die or recover were made in the club-houses. Mary went almost daily with Lady Juliana, and spent a short time at the bedside; there was not much to be said, and she knew not how to say that little. She could express sympathy, which was almost as much as he could bear; but sometimes his wistful eye seemed to ask for more.

He had the best of advice—but the case was taken out of human hands; the best of cookery, but no appetite; the softest bed, but how he wearied of it! how tired he was of the heavy velvet canopy with nodding plumes! They put him in mind of a hearse; he wished he had been laid anywhere else. And perhaps he would only be moved from under them *to* a hearse: distressing thought!

“Sorel! Sorel, are you there?”

"Yes, my lord. Can I do anything?"

"Nothing, my good fellow. I only felt so lonely. What o'clock is it?"

"Past midnight, my lord."

How many hours to dawn! and how few dawns might remain for him! there was no comfort there. 'The inevitable fate,' 'the last debt of nature,' 'the common lot of all.' What trite, hackneyed expressions; but how dread the thing expressed! The earth seemed gliding away from under him; he was drifting, drifting, more and more rapidly to the verge of the fall.

And after this he got well! Our merciful God gives us a glimpse, sometimes, of what He could inflict on us; and then refrains. What does common gratitude claim of us in return? David said, "I will receive the cup of salvation, and call on the name of the Lord." Hannah More

would have told Lord Harry something to the same effect; but she was miles away in her pretty country home, looking after the poor, the sick, and the ignorant. A clergyman of the right sort would have been an inestimable boon to Lord Harry; but he had shunned and ridiculed the clergy in his days of health; and what sort of clergyman would have been the right one? Not John Newton! he was his horror, his terror. Good Bishop Porteus would perhaps have been of service to him; but he did not know it.

No, Lord Harry survived the crisis and lost sight of his *vapeurs noirs*, for such he chose to consider them; and he decided to keep them out of sight henceforth and always if he could. It was a great relief to Lady Juliana and Mary when the daily demand on them was intermitted; not but

that Lord Harry was very desirous of retaining all the privileges of sickness, but this could not be. The weakness succeeding his illness was more trying than others supposed or cared about. It had gratified him to be the object of so much solicitude ; to know he was missed from his place, and that his door was beset by inquirers. As he got better it pleased him to turn over the shoal of cards, and to hear Sorel read newspaper scraps about him (the material of which Sorel and Captain Beaufort had supplied) such as, "LORD HARRY BELLAIR. —We regret to learn that this accomplished nobleman still lies in a very precarious state. We could better spare many a less gifted man." "Lord Harry Bellair had a restless night." "Our readers will be gratified to learn that Lord Harry Bellair is decidedly better." So



great is the pleasure of seeing one's self in print that Captain Beaufort and Sorel had real satisfaction in concocting these scraps, and felt themselves no unworthy members of the press. Captain Beaufort even thought that as Lord Harry must die some time or other, it was highly desirable that some biographical notice of him should be drawn up by a judicious friend, in time for immediate insertion on the occurrence of that melancholy event; and knowing no one more judicious than himself, went about collecting dates and family facts with the utmost caution he possessed.

“ You have such wonderful vitality, my lord ! ”

Though this was notoriously false, Lord Harry liked to hear it, even from Captain Beaufort, of whom he had taken the exact measure very early in their acquaintance.

His object now was to tranquillize himself as much as possible, amusing the present day without taking thought for the morrow. Is not the Christian directed to take no thought for the morrow? And do we not see many aged believers literally fulfilling the injunction, while placidly awaiting their summons? Certainly we do; and their case may be contrasted with Lord Harry's in the following manner. Suppose a traveller awaiting the railway train on the platform, comfortably buttoned to the chin, his railway-rug on his arm, his carpet-bag in his hand, his ticket in his pocket, his heavy luggage duly labelled and put in the truck. The train may be a little behind time, or may come up sooner than was expected: but it makes no great difference to him; he has but to await it, and meantime can composedly chat with his friends,

pat that little child on the head, and buy his "Bradshaw." Up comes the train: he is ready; a little bustle ensues, he is off, and out of sight.

See that other traveller, also on the platform—his face is equally smiling—his friends are equally sedulous in their efforts to divert him to the last minute; they chat, they tell good stories, they rally and compliment, they say witty things of the absent, they criticise the floating literature and reigning celebrities of the day with ease and terseness: they are singularly successful in amusing the passing hour. The train appears in sight—is he ready? ah, no; where is his book? where is his luggage? where is his ticket? He looks blankly at them as they shove him in and clap to the door. He is off! but where! and how will he fare? The others look

rather awkwardly at one another, shrug, vaguely hope for the best, and scatter themselves.

Colonel Dalmayne, considerably shocked at the interruption to his tirade, acknowledged the solemnity of the summons to Mary, and yielded her to Lord Harry with a good grace. She had been in the right all the while, and he had been wrong, he had been hot-tempered and wrong-headed: the poor old nobleman had had one foot in the grave all along, and his interest in her had been paternal, after all: or, whatever faults might be justly laid to his charge, he was at any rate on the point of being called to his account. Could human jealousy, petty rivalry, find place at such a moment? Oh no! Mary, like an angel as she was, only acted in accordance with her nature in hastening to the sick-room and

ministering the gentlest consolation. Such were Dalmayne's convictions, and he adhered to them with praiseworthy steadiness for many days—in fact, till the public prints announced that Lord Harry was getting better. Then he went to Laura, the only one at home, and said, "Can this be true? Is Lord Harry really recovering?"

"Yes, it really is true," said Laura, gladly. "Wonderful, is it not?"

"Wonderful, without doubt. I certainly never expected him to get about again."

"He will though, you'll see. I never gave him up as Mary did. I saw him yesterday, and he had quite his old look."

"Well, it is an old look," said Dalmayne, "and he's a very old man."

"Why, of course he is," said Laura, "and he has been an invalid all his life, and people have always been thinking his

life hardly worth a day's purchase, but yet dozens of these people have dropped off before him, and I dare say he will outlive a great many more."

"Yes, I dare say he will—indeed I'm convinced of it," said Dalmayne, who began to think he had wasted a great deal of compassion on him. "What I hope is, that Mary will see it in a common-sense light, as you do, and cease to entertain needless fears about him."

"Oh, she can't do otherwise," said Laura.

"And then, you know," pursued Dalmayne, "of course she will see how unnecessary it is for her to bestow her time on him as she is now doing; which will be quite uncalled for, and, in fact, hardly the correct thing."

"Oh, of course," said Laura, "Mary

has plenty of common sense; and this affair has broken up our family arrangements sadly."

Dalmayne was soothed by these expressions of concurrence, though much dissatisfied at being obliged to conclude his visit without seeing Mary. The next time he found her at home, she was detailing to a visitor with some minuteness the particulars of Lord Harry's recovery. He listened at first with assumed interest, and soon with unconcealed weariness; and when the visitor was gone, observed, "These sick-room details begin to be a little nauseating."

"Dear me, Colonel Dalmayne," cried Mary, in surprise, "how long have you been so inhuman?"

"Only since your interesting invalid has seemed to be in as little danger of

paying the common debt of humanity as I am."

"Well, I think it is a debt owed by common humanity to show some sympathy for friends when they are ill."

"When they are ill—yes."

"And when they are getting well. You have no notion how frail he is."

"Well, perhaps I have not. Instead of being frail, he really appears to me a very tough old gentleman."

"Positively, Dalmayne, you have the air of not wishing him to recover."

"On the contrary, I wish him to get completely well as soon as possible, which apparently will be very soon indeed. I wish him to be so completely well as to require no nursing—no cockering and petting by the ladies."

"Ah, that will be a long time yet."



"Yes, if you let him have his way, and enjoy all the privileges of a sick man when he is quite well."

"How completely mistaken you are about him! If you could only see him and judge for yourself."

"Thanks! I have left my card and that is enough," said Dalmayne, gloomily. "I don't mean to swell the list of his satellites. In fact, our minds don't fit."

Mary looked gravely at him for a moment, and then changed the subject. He gladly followed the lead.

When he was gone, Laura said, "Mary, I suppose you really are serious in your attachment to Colonel Dalmayne?"

"Of course I am," said Mary.

"Then really I think you must be careful of what you are about, or you may lose him yet."

"What do you mean?"

"He seems so dreadfully jealous!"

"I am too well aware of that," said Mary sighing. "It increases on him, I think. He gives way to it more."

"Then you must be more careful."

"I am carefulness personified, but 'tis no use. He is quite unreasonable."

"Better humour him and take no notice."

"That might do in a solitary instance; but am I to do so all my life? That's a melancholy prospect, and, after all, might not succeed; for I believe your jealous people, the more they are humoured, the more unreasonable they become. It is a kind of mania. Laura, I am very unhappy about him. I love him very much, and I am convinced he loves me; but I am not so sure that we can be happy together."

"You are not going to give him up, surely, when things have gone so far," said Laura, in alarm.

"No," said Mary, slowly; "I cannot do that yet; but if he goes on trying me as he does, he may drive me to it."

"My dear Mary, don't talk of it—don't think of it. He may tease; but I am certain that if you give him up you will be wretched."

"It will be his fault."

"You will be miserable."

"Of course, I know I shall be very unhappy: but will not one sharp pain be better than pain all one's life?"

"Vain regrets may give pain all one's life."

"No!" said Mary, proudly. "If he can understand me so little and be so intensely selfish as to insist on my breaking

with an old and most kind friend in his hours of helplessness and dejection, his character must be so inferior to what I thought it, that I shall have no vain regrets."

"People run after moonshine sometimes," said Laura, uneasily; "and when they think they have caught it, they find they have nothing but a handful of cold water. Here has papa been telling all the town of your engagement. People have wondered, and congratulated, and envied, and circulated all sorts of talk about it; and now, if it is broken off, they will say no end of injurious things, and declare that you *have* been engaged to Lord Harry all the time, and call you a coquette, and I know not what."

"Who can gag the blatant beast? The only way is not to mind him."

“And, after all, what has happened? Nothing, as yet, but that you and Dalmayne have had a few words; and he is a very nice creature—a splendid man! Oh, Mary, *don't* lose him for want of a little of your usual sense.”

“Certainly not, if I can avoid it,” said Mary.

## CHAPTER VI.

### INDIGNATION.

"Mary, I believed thee true,  
And I was blest in so believing ;  
But now, I mourn that e'er I knew  
A girl so fair and so deceiving."

IN pursuance of this resolution, Mary absented herself from Lord Harry for three whole days, and contented herself with messages. She earned no credit for this from Colonel Dalmayne, who had been summoned from town on professional business ; while Lord Harry was consternated at his isolation. "You must really go to the poor old fellow, Mary," said her

father. "You have accustomed him to your visits, and he is ready to lie down and die at this falling off. He is *abîmé*, *consterné*."

"But, papa, you have been to him."

"But, my dear, vain as I may be, I'm not a wit and a beauty. You amuse, you soothe him."

"But Laura may go, papa." Laura went; but Laura did not do as well. "I believe, Mary, nothing but the sight of you will satisfy him. He says he is but half comforted unless he has his two princesses."

"Oh, well, I'll go to-morrow. It is rather a troublesome thing sometimes, to be a favourite. Sir Thomas More found it so in his palmy days, and ingeniously feigned to grow more and more stupid, and less and less diverting, till——"

"Till at length he succeeded so well that he got his head cut off," said Laura. "I think you may choose a better example."

"You are as amusing, to the full, as I am."

"No, I'm not, or at all events he does not think me so, which comes to the same thing. How do you think I amused him? By talking of you."

"No wonder he found you dull."

"But it was because I saw by his face, his whole mien, that he found me dull, that I began talking of you, and immediately he brightened. If he had known you when he was young——"

"But I was not born till half a century afterwards."

"More than that, if you please, since I am but two years younger."



When Mary went to him at last, Lord Harry had actually worked himself into a nervous fever; and Sorel had a wretched time of it. She was shocked at his altered appearance, his painful voice, his trembling frame; and yet directly he saw her, a change for the better came over him, and he kissed her hand, almost with tears of gratitude, for coming. "My dearest child, how could you be so cruel?" said he, reproachfully. "I have been absolutely miserable in your absence. Had it been caused by any unavoidable necessity—the illness of Dalmayne, for example—I trust I could have been manly enough to support it. But to be forgotten—"

"But, dear Lord Harry, I wrote."

"My idol, you did; and time was, when a note would have sufficed me. But that was in the happy days, not so

long gone neither, when I could answer your notes, when gay and cheerful images came 'fast as the periods' from my flowing quill.' My quill won't flow now, even when Sorel dips it, for my poor hand won't guide it. You pity me, Mary! I see it in your dear face; and it is not a pleasant thing certainly to be such an automaton, even in the daily little routines of life; but to be obliged to let that sharp fellow break the seal of every letter for me, and, while I answer it, to hold the ink so close to me that he can read every word I write over my shoulder. . . . Ah!" and he gave a little shudder.

Mary quite entered into his feelings; and to efface such unpleasant recollections laid herself out to please and entertain him from real kindness of heart. The result was that she left him really better;

and he gratefully said at parting, "My divinity, if I had you always near me, you would cure me more effectually than a legion of doctors."

She returned home cheerful, in the consciousness of having made another person so, to find Colonel Dalmayne pacing the drawing-room like a tiger in its cage.

"Mary!" he exclaimed, "I thought you never would return; and I have such important affairs to communicate to you!"

"Dear Dalmayne, how glad I am to see you," said she, with such unaffected joy in her face that his impatience ceased to exist.

"What is it all about?" said she, throwing aside her hat and gloves, and sitting down.

"I have been offered a governorship in

the West Indies," said he. "It is a good appointment—too good to be refused, and the question is, will you go out there with me?"

"You almost take away my breath," said Mary. "I suppose I must say, 'Where thou goest, I will go.'"

"If you *will* but say that!" cried he.

"Well, I don't know what to think. I suppose it will end in that. I should like to know a little more about it first."

"The salary is considerable — four thousand a year. I suppose you would consider that enough?"

"Oh, of course I should! Only the place itself, the climate, the society."

"Society there's little or none, I believe. We must be society for one another. The climate—oh, it's one of the healthiest

of the islands, I believe. Of course, it's hot."

"Of course. I wonder what papa will think."

"Think for yourself, without reference to papa. Your own judgment is best worth having."

"But, dear Dalmayne, I can't act without the advice of my natural guardian."

"You are of age, I think."

"Yes, but you must not be so quick on me. I cannot run away at the first word from those that have been dear to me all my life."

"I thought it was a Scriptural injunction," said Dalmayne, "that a woman should leave father and mother and cleave to her husband, and that her desire should be to him—him only."

“ ‘Therefore shall a *man* leave his father and mother and cleave unto his wife.’ ”

At any rate, I’ve neither father nor mother to leave,” said Dalmayne, hastily, “and you have only a father who does not profess the least sentimentality about parting with his daughters by marriage.”

Mary bit her lip, and said, “There is Laura.”

“Laura will marry too, I’ve no doubt. Or she might come out with us.”

“And leave papa? Oh, Dalmayne!”

“He and Lord Harry would take care of one another,” said Dalmayne hastily.

“A very unfeeling speech, I think,” said Mary, colouring deeply.

“I see how it is, Mary,” said he, rapidly losing temper. “You won’t go. You choose to remain, and rock the cradle of

declining age ; rock Lord Harry's cradle, I mean ; your father does not want one."

"No, indeed," said Mary, with indignation. "You have settled the matter now, yourself, Colonel Dalmayne. Am I to go at a word, at a moment, to the confines of civilization, to a deathful climate, to have for my sole companion a man who can speak thus of my objects of affection?"

"In the heat of the moment," began Dalmayne.

"Pray, say no more," said Mary, raising her hand in deprecation. "You have precipitated my refusal ; you have given me no time for deliberation, for consultation, for endeavouring to overcome natural repugnance."

"Objections quite in the spirit of Ruth !"

"You may be sarcastic if you will; you have aggrieved me nevertheless."

"How aggrieved?"

"Surely there is no need to ask. You began by proposing a momentous step to me, and directly I begin to consider it, you take umbrage at my consideration."

"If you will only consider it," said Dalmayne. "But remember there is not much time for consideration."

"You bid me do and not do a thing in the same breath. This is a very astounding matter to me, Dalmayne. I really cannot see its bearings all at once."

"What is there to alarm you? You know me to be a soldier; were ready, I thought, to accompany me to a foreign station; here is a splendid appointment, such as most persons would jump at; and, yet, to enhance the value of your accept-



ance, you ungracefully, unkindly hang back."

"But supposing papa disapproves."

"I'm quite clear there's no need for such a supposition."

"Or that I preferred your declining the appointment."

"*That* is indeed too monstrous a thing to suppose. No, Mary, you must know very well that in declining that you decline me, for I should have no hope of an equivalent; and I cannot afford such a home as I should choose my wife to have without it."

"Not if your wife preferred a simpler home?"

"Why, no. I think she would have no right to ask it. To refuse this governorship would be to cut short my military career at once. I should most probably

never get another step; and I own I have ambition."

"You offer me no alternative, then," said Mary.

"Pardon me; I am obliged to go, but you are not."

She was meaning to go all the time, but did not like saying so at once. He misconstrued her delay, and writhed under it. "I see you like to behold the wriggles of the fish on the hook," said he. "The torments of the hart caught in the thicket are pastime to you. Mary! if you had any generosity, you would act very differently in this matter. It is well for me, perhaps, that I learn your true character before things have gone further; but it is a bitter lesson."

Visitors were announced: in great agitation he left the room and the house.

Mary was much fluttered, even agitated; but yet she knew not how completely she had let the tide in her affairs escape her. She thought they had had one of their usual little misunderstandings, and that Dalmayne would cool as soon as he was by himself, and fly to her and declare he had been in the wrong, and she must forgive him like an angel.

"News! glorious news, girls!" exclaimed Captain Beaufort, "Dalmayne is gazetted general."

"Indeed? that is news to me," said Mary, flushing.

"What, did he tell you nothing about it?"

"Not a word. Of course I knew he expected it soon or late."

"And he is to be governor of Santa Lucia."

"He has been offered the appointment, you mean."

"Oh, he can't be such a fool as to refuse it. Why the place is worth four thousand a year."

"Why, then I suppose you will have to go out there with him!" cried Laura, dropping her work and looking full at Mary.

"That depends," said Mary.

"Dear me," cried Laura, rising and putting her arms round Mary, "this is very sudden. I can't think how I can spare you."

"Nor I, how I can leave you," said Mary, dropping a few tears. Laura cried a little too.

"'Pon my soul, I feel for you, girls," said the captain. It will be a dreadful blow to you to part. But it will be a

splendid thing for you, you know, Mary. You will be the queen of a vice-royal court."

"A very little court, I believe," said Mary. "Dalmaine says there will be scarcely any society. We must be society for one another."

"Why, that is just what lovers like," said Laura. "You will have romance and position too. You will have nothing to regret but papa and me; and though we shall miss you dreadfully, the knowledge of your happiness and brilliant position will console us; and I suppose it will only be for three years."

Mary looked at her wistfully. Was not Laura making too sure? And was not she treating the separation too lightly? Three years? How much might happen in three years! But visions of gaiety and


dignity were gaining the ascendancy over fears and regrets. She could not help thinking her father rather unfeeling to glory so openly in her prospects without even a decent shadow of reluctance to lose her.

Laura's conduct was more consoling : she was unaffectedly attached to Mary, and would certainly miss her terribly ; but with her usual lightness, she put everything painful in the background, and ran on amazingly about the brilliant life of the governor's lady, till she cast a kind of glamour over Mary.

"He has accepted it!" cried Captain Beaufort exultingly, at breakfast, as he eagerly looked at the gazette.

"I wish he had seen me first," said Mary.

"How calmly you take it," said Laura ;  
"almost coldly."



“Oh, I am neither calm nor cold. Only I feel as if I were about to be swept down the stream.”

“Quite natural at such a crisis. I suppose he will come early to-day.”

But he did not come; though Mary was awaiting him till quite late. Her head ached violently. She felt the want of a little fresh air to restore her. A note was brought to her. She took it eagerly; but it was from Lord Harry, not Dalmayne.

“I am ill, my dear girl; but you are happy; let that atone to me for being weary of my life. This sort of thing cannot go on much longer. I shall soon cease to burthen you. Forgive me for troubling you now.”

“Poor Lord Harry!” said Mary. “He is very far from the fact when he calls

- me happy. I cannot go to him; he does not even ask it; but I suppose I must write."

When Richard was summoned, he said Mr. Sorel himself had brought the note and was charged with a message to say that if it would not too much inconvenience either of the young ladies, he hoped one of them would take pity on him for a few minutes.

"How unfortunate that Laura is out!" said Mary. "Richard, tell Mr. Sorel I will come round presently, but it can only be for a very short time, on account of pressing affairs." She did not think Lord Harry would have heard of the governorship, and was anxious to know how he would take it.

Richard fetched a hackney-coach, helped her into it, and mounted the box. Just as



it drove round the corner, she caught a glimpse of Dalmayne turning the street. She eagerly leant forward, but he did not see her; she pulled the check-string; it was too late. "Richard, turn back instantly; I want to see General Dalmayne."

Most haste, worst speed; the hackney-coach wheel became locked in that of a costermonger's cart; much swearing and hallooing ensued; but there was a dead lock.

"Do run after him," cried Mary frantically, "and beg him to wait my return. Say I am coming."

Richard darted off; but soon returned out of breath. The General had called at the house; but finding she was not within, had departed.

"How vexatious!" exclaimed Mary. "Then drive on to the square."

Lord Harry had heard of the appointment and was overwhelmed by it. Not a word of remonstrance, but a torrent of regrets; he wrung her hand in his; called down blessings on her for all her goodness and sweetness to him; wished it had pleased Heaven to spare her to him a very, very little longer—it would have been quite long enough. She must think of her old friend sometimes.

Mary had a painful misgiving that her fate was not so settled as everybody assumed. This taking for granted and resignation to necessity so tried her, that she shed tears. He, mistaking them for tears of compassionate tenderness at losing sight of him, was quite overwhelmed, bade her go with his blessing, yet detained her; so that it was much longer than she had intended when she was able to leave him;

and her faltering assurance that he was taking alarm too soon, her departure was not at all settled, she had not consented to it yet—were only received by him as kind frauds.

On reaching home, much troubled by this interview, she found that Dalmayne had called a second time ; and finding her still with Lord Harry, had left his card for her with *P. P. C.* written and underlined vehemently.

He went down to Portsmouth that night, and embarked immediately. The wind had suddenly changed to a favourable quarter.

## CHAPTER VII.

### SEPARATION.

"Say, is there any point so nice  
As that of offering advice?  
To bid your friend her errors mend  
Is almost *certain* to offend."

WILKIE.

OF course it was a nine days' wonder—a nine days' scandal too, and in the case of some persons, downright slander. Of course they inferred that the General had given Mary up just at last for some grave cause; some said she had proved utterly heartless, and meant to marry Lord Harry after all, with the well-grounded expectation of soon becoming a widow; others

concluded she must be reckoning on a rich legacy ; and perhaps her marriage with Dalmayne was only postponed.

Lord Harry heard of Dalmayne's sailing without her with a strange thrill of pleasure and triumph. The young man had not carried off his treasure after all. The dear child was spared to him—she cared for him.

Mary herself was not heart-broken, but stunned ; her happiness was wrecked. She ran over in a bewildered way all that had been said and done ; alternately blamed him and herself ; alternately cleared each : gave it up as a hopeless question. She did not feel, even now, that she should have liked being swept off beyond seas in this impetuous way—did not believe she could have done it. Perhaps he had been the victim of circumstances like herself ;

perhaps he could have explained all had they met. Then why could not he write? Surely he *would* write?

The only way of stilling the dull pain at her heart, and of obtaining rest for her throbbing head, was to tell herself incessantly that he *would* write, by the first opportunity. There would be trying delay; but then she had wanted delay. Perhaps he would even ask her to go out to him; perhaps she would even go.

Laura was in consternation; greatly blaming Mary, and greatly pitying her. Captain Beaufort was confounded by what had happened, and very angry. "You have played your cards very badly, Mary," said he. "I wish you may not have Dalmaine's ruin to answer for. Young men are driven to strange courses sometimes when they are disappointed and

reckless. Grant that he was an impatient, hot-headed fellow—why, he required all the more humouring! You won't readily catch such another prize, I fancy. If you do, you had better not let it slip this way through your fingers."

"Papa, pray don't talk so. Consider my head."

"And consider what the world will say, Mary, and the questions I shall be asked, and the difficulty I shall find in answering them."

"People who can be so grossly indelicate as to question you on family matters deserve no answer but a look."

"Ah, but that's not my way. I don't answer people by looks; for it's not the way I like to be answered. Truth is truth," said Captain Beaufort with virtuous emphasis.

"Truth is truth? Yes, of course," said Mary: "but you don't know the truth, and I don't even know it myself. General Dalmayne called here twice when I was unfortunately out, otherwise he would doubtless have explained things. The wind changing in that sudden way, compelled him to sail at once. I could not possibly have got ready in time, had I been so minded."

Captain Beaufort drummed on the table, and then said, "That being the truth, there can be no possible reason why it should not be known."

"None at all; it might be proclaimed at Charing Cross."

"And therefore there is no harm in my telling people. I still think, though, between you and me, that this isn't quite



all, and that you have played your cards very badly."

"Let me entreat you, papa, not to use that expression any more about it. It is hardly worthy of the occasion."

"Faith, the occasion itself is not a very worthy one, I think! A lovers' tiff carried to such length as to break off an advantageous settlement."

"I had no idea, papa, you would be so willing to lose me at a moment's notice."

Without answering this, he said, "In fact, I know the matter of your quarrel by intuition, just as well as if you told me. It's all about Lord Harry; and I don't know that Dalmayne's umbrage is altogether surprising."

"Why now, papa, did not you yourself desire me to go to him?"

"Just that once; but certainly if I

were a spirited young fellow, engaged to a pretty girl always running after an invalid old nobleman with as flattering a tongue as any in Christendom——”

“ Oh, papa, papa ! to turn round on me in this way ! after encouraging and urging me to be attentive to him.”

“ Attentive ? Yes ; only you see Dal-  
mayne didn't like it, and you wouldn't give up, and he saw you unyielding, and took fire and bolted. Well, well, Mary, it's no use crying now. I hope he may yet write and make it up ; but you have certainly made a pretty mess of it.”

To avoid altercations like these, and because she was really ill from distress of mind, Mary kept her room for a few days, and Laura was very kind to her. To do justice to Captain Beaufort, he confined himself as nearly as could be expected of

him to the few facts Mary had given him, "Yes, he's off. The thing was too good, you know, to refuse, and he was obliged to obey orders; and Mary had no time to get ready, and we could not have spared her, you know, in that sudden way; so they must wait—they're both young enough. The fair wind set in very unfairly! 'Tis a fair wind that blows nobody any harm, ha, ha, ha! We must reverse the adage."

Mary felt desolate. She had not a thoroughly religious friend among her acquaintance; she knew nothing of the consolations of religion. She had a dim idea there were such, and wished they could be brought to her, but it was only in a vague, impotent way. She went to no parties; it was not expected of her; all her little world knew there had been an affair of the heart—or at least a projected

marriage ; and they would have been surprised if she had immediately come among them. Laura remained at home to keep her company, though she found it very dull. Captain Beaufort went to his card-parties as usual. As for Lord Harry, Mary neither went nor wrote to him for a while, feeling him to be in some sort the origin of her troubles, and not quite forgiving him for it. Laura thought his case hard, and went instead, and brought back kind messages. Lord Harry knew her heart was sore, and respected her sorrow. One day he sent her a still kinder message than usual ; saying it would be a pleasure to see her face, if she did not speak a word. Captain Beaufort had just been telling her that people were beginning to talk strangely of her shutting herself up in this way, and to think that either she must have thought

Dalmayne very much to blame, or that he must have thought her so. Stung by this, and rather tired of remaining in-doors, Mary resolved to go forth. She would begin by calling on Mrs. Forsyth, a lady she had only known recently, whose society was rather mixed, comprising some of the gay and some of the religious world. Two other visitors who had preceded her were talking so loudly and eagerly that they did not hear her announced.

One of them was saying, "I would not condemn her for going to him if it were for the least spiritual good, but merely to amuse the vacant hours of a poor old man like Lord Harry, with one foot in the grave——"

"Miss Beaufort!" repeated the servant in a louder voice. There was an abrupt pause. Mary's heart had for a moment

stopped beating, and now it was palpitating violently. Mrs. Forsyth came forward with outstretched hand and the kindest manner. There was a little confusion and bustle, owing to the other two visitors hastily paying their parting compliments and going out, one of them looking very red, the other darting a searching look at Mary. When they were gone, Mrs. Forsyth took her cold hand in both her own, and drew her to a seat beside her on a couch.

"I am so glad to see you," said she, very kindly.

Mary was very pale. She almost feared to trust her voice. Directly she did so, her self-command gave way; large tears coursed her cheeks.

"I'm so sorry for you. Don't speak," said Mrs. Forsyth, kinder still, if possible.

"You have had a shock of some sort, I understand, and, with all your strength of mind, have not yet been quite able to get over it. No need for words. I feel for you with great sympathy."

"Those people," gasped Mary.

"Oh, who minds those people? They live on what they fetch and carry. They have no affairs of their own to take interest in, and so they meddle with those of other people. Everybody values them at what they are worth."

"I don't know what they say about me; at least, I only heard a half sentence," said Mary, drying her eyes and trying to smile, "only why should they talk of me at all?"

"That is a liberty, unfortunately, that nobody can hinder them of; but, if it be any consolation to you, they really said

nothing very bad. Would you like to hear the sum total of it?"

"Yes."

"They said, I knew of course it was all off between you and General Dalmayne. Then one corrected the other, and qualified the assertion by saying that at all events the marriage was postponed."

"Why, of course it is," said Mary, with burning cheeks, "when I am here and he is on his way to the West Indies!"

"She said so, and that he had been ordered off at a moment's notice, and had scarcely time to say good-bye, and could not say it, because when he went to you he found you had gone to Lord Harry."

"All that is true, but——"

"They gave no more facts; the rest was only animadversion."

"But why——"



"They called Lord Harry selfish to monopolize you at such a time, and you very . . . very thoughtless of General Dalmayne to be out of the way at such a time."

"Why, of course, if I had had the least idea——"

"Yes, yes, that is so often the case with all of us. We so often commit some fatal imprudence, when, if we had had the least idea of the consequences, we would have avoided it. I pity you, my dear Miss Beaufort, very much indeed ; however, it will all come right, rely upon it. You will laugh at it all some of these days."

"Never," said Mary, in a low voice. "And then, what more did they say?"

"Nothing. At least, just as you came in, Lady Kitty was saying she should think nothing of your visits to Lord Harry if you

were caring for his spiritual interests; which really was laughably absurd, coming from her, you know, because she has always been a complete worldling, and it is only because she would see what one or two of our fashionable devotees could find attractive in a popular Methodist preacher, that she went to hear him and picked up a few of his phrases. But you know a wise person will take counsel even from an enemy. I have not the privilege of knowing Lord Harry myself, but I know him by report to be a man of wit and intellect, a good deal spoilt by the fashionable world, and with very little interest in the world to come. At least, that is what I have heard. Is it correct?"

"Yes, in a certain sense it is," said Mary.

"Furthermore, I have been told that

he, a man old enough to be your grandfather, with no young people of his own about him, and with the natural yearning we all have for the young and ingenuous, has long manifested the most fatherly interest in you, and your sister, who, with your father's entire concurrence, have been to him as daughters."

"Yes, that is true, every word of it," said Mary.

"He has always had failing health, I believe," said Mrs. Forsyth, "and this year everybody knows he has had a seizure of a very alarming kind. The public took interest in it—the public prints gave frequent bulletins—he was not expected to live—his recovery caused quite a sensation. As he got better, he naturally was anxious that you and your sister should help to relieve the tedium of convalescence."

"Yes, that is exactly it, dear Mrs. Forsyth!"

"Lady Juliana told me about it, and how kind and daughterly you both were to him. She said you contributed very materially to his recovery. She was very grateful to you."

"And he was very grateful, too, I assure you. More so than there was need. For after all, what did we give up to him? Half an hour or an hour of our time one or other of us, daily."

"But then you were engaged to be married. And your lover, just like a man, and a young man, wished to engross you entirely—could make no allowance for your old friend—grew jealous of him, in fact."

"If he would ever have been at the pains to understand the footing on which we were," began Mary.

"Why, they do say," observed Mrs. Forsyth, smiling, "that Lord Harry has the most beguiling tongue of any man living—that his power of delicately flattering is such as to outweigh, with any woman, all the advantages of youth, looks, and health."

"His flattery never hurts me," said Mary.

"Flattery is very hurtful, however, in itself," said Mrs. Forsyth; "and I don't wonder that General Dalmayne, knowing its universal effect, should dread its power on you. He might ask himself, how can a poor fellow such as I am ever say things that will bear comparison with the pretty compliments so gracefully uttered by this dreadful old lord?"

"He is the last man in the world to ask himself such a question," said Mary,

laughing a little. "Dalmayne has not a bad opinion of himself."

"Well, I am very absurd to put words in his mouth he is unlikely to utter," said Mrs. Forsyth, glad to see her smile. "We will leave him to make his own speeches; and very telling ones, no doubt, they are. You have a gift for letter-writing, I'm told. 'Tis an immense power intrusted to some women. I am sure that you will not abuse nor neglect it—that your letters will be even more enchanting to him than your conversation—that he will get them by rote, and weary to hasten back to the writer."

A light dawned in Mary's eyes. "But if he does not write to me," she said slowly:

"Might not you write first?"

"Well, no; I think not."

"You must know best," said Mrs. Forsyth, doubtfully; "only beware of letting punctilio mar your happiness."

"Oh, I expect to hear from him. And I shall rejoice to write in return."

"Oh, then, all's well on that score. Absence may be borne very well, if there's no estrangement. Forsyth and I were apart five years; but we never lost heart. He said my letters strengthened and comforted him more than anything else did. So may yours do to General Dalmayne. Their influence will be purifying—they will keep him from seeking or yielding to ignoble pleasures. You will learn more of each other's minds than in any other possible way. And now, if I have not said too much already—"

"Oh, you know not how I value what you say."

“One word, then, about Lord Harry. To act fairly by General Dalmayne, you must conduct yourself in his absence exactly as if in his presence; or with more caution. Lord Harry really has, or may be supposed to have, as Lady Kitty said, one foot in the grave; he cannot live long; he may die soon: If he were to die to-morrow nobody would be much surprised: You say he is grateful for your kindness; might you not give him something to be still more grateful for, by smoothing the way to hopes and privileges of a higher sort—happiness that this world can neither give nor take away?”

“I wish I could—but how?”

“Your own excellent judgment will tell you that. Look for opportunities; they will be sure to offer. Some other people are coming in to interrupt us—how



tiresome ! And we leave London *en route* for Lisbon to-morrow."

" Oh, how sorry I am ! "

" I am sorry too, but I am very glad to have had this talk. Good-bye," (kissing her,) " my best wishes attend you. I shall often think of you."

## CHAPTER VIII.

### MISTAKEN, FORSAKEN:

"Can wealth give happiness? Look round and see  
What gay distress! what splendid misery."

MARY returned home more calmed and comforted than, half an hour before, she could have believed possible: She went straight to the book-shelves to look over what she was accustomed to call "Sunday books;" but how poor a stock there was! Plays, poems, criticisms, travels, history, biography—everything that pertained to this world, scarcely anything that referred to the next. At last she took a volume of

the "Spectator," selected a paper of Addison's, put a mark in the place, and carried the book with her to Lord Harry.

She thought, when she went in, that he looked more shrivelled and sickly than ever; but his face lighted up, and he half-raised himself from the depths of his easy-chair to greet her. "My sweet angel," said he, "you are always so good——"

"This is not one of my good days," said Mary, putting her hand in his. "I am not equal to talking, but I thought I would come and offer to read to you."

"Do, my dearest child—it will be inexpressibly interesting. What have you got there? Ho, Addison. 'He that would acquire a pure style must give his days and nights to Addison.' Very well; he is always worth attention, though I never formed my style on his."

Mary always read well; and just now her balmy voice and distinct utterance were quite keenly appreciated by him. "You give every word its beauty and value," said he, when she ceased. "What does all that he says amount to apart from his well-chosen language, and the added charm imparted by you? That devotion opens the mind to great conceptions, and fills it with more sublime ideas than it would otherwise entertain. If it be very true, it is not very new."

"Is not one of the tests of a good writer his being able to give novelty to what is not absolutely new?"

"In that case, my dear child, Addison has certainly not carried his point here; for there is absolutely nothing novel in his treatment of the subject. Rather a heavy

one, too, is it not? I prefer his character pieces."

"Oh yes, of course; so do I."

"Why then not give me what we both prefer?"

This well-intended attempt of Mary's was rather a failure. At any rate, however, it drew her out of herself, and she would not be baffled by a single defeat. Sir William Temple, Cowley, Shenstone, were all tried by her in turn; Lord Harry's remarks were often caustic and curious, sometimes pertinent, sometimes captious. He loved her readings well enough as texts for playful controversy, and enjoyed drawing out for his own and sole benefit conversational powers that might have delighted a saloon. Gradually Mary was becoming less heartbroken, but she was increasingly pensive; and though she never

bored him with preaching, for which, indeed, she had no vocation, Lord Harry grew a little impatient at the substitution of grave talk for amusement. He saw that Mary's heart was far away, and that her visits to him were from duty rather than inclination. Laura was the most entertaining now; and yet he peevishly told himself that he preferred Mary at her worst to Laura at her best.

All this time she was sickening for letters; but in those days a voyage to the West Indies was a vastly different thing from what it is now, and communications were about as long on the road as they are now from Australia.

As the season advanced the happy possessors of country seats went out of town; others visited fashionable watering-places. Lord Harry hated London when

it was out of season; and though his power of bearing removal to his suburban retreat was a matter of question, he was determined on the experiment, and effected it without any very disastrous result. It hastened his downward progress, however.

The Beauforts took a house to be near him; rather an inexpedient step, Mrs. Forsyth would have said; but she was beyond reach of remark. Of course Lady Bab and Lady Kitty said they were following Lord Harry like harpies; but who cared for what they said? Mary was getting apathetic with regard to the gossip of society.

Merrily rang the Chiswick bells when Harry Levitt received the hand of sweet Lucy Tolhurst from her fond father. This had been many months ago; the happy pair started immediately afterwards for

the Continent. Wedding tours of this description were not then usual; but it had long been a dream of Lucy's to see some of the European capitals; and as Levitt's inclinations were the same, and his purse was full of her money, there was no reason why he should not gratify her and himself.

Mr. Oldworth had of course been invited to the wedding; and, with a torn heart, he consented to go. He was spared the trial to his feelings, however. Just as he was on the point of starting, his course was diverted, by a note from his aunt, from the wedding party to the bedside of his grandmother. She partially recovered, though only to be increasingly the object of care to her affectionate daughter.

As the slow winter dragged on its course, Mr. Oldworth went from time to



time to see Mr. Tolhurst. His visits, first merely designed for the customary felicitations, were made more frequent when he found how much they were needed. Mr. Tolhurst was becoming painfully aware that instead of gaining a son he had lost a daughter.

“They were to have returned three months ago, Joe! and what can they want over there; what diversion can they find in places where they can’t understand the spoken language? Oh yes, Lucy learnt French at her boarding-school, but she tells me ’tis very little use to her—they speak it with such a different accent. Mighty expensive, too, living is, over there; they run through a sight of money. A word in your ear, Joe. I know you’ll speak candidly to your father’s old friend; is Levitt addicted to play?”

"Sir," said Mr. Oldworth, with painful embarrassment, "you ought to know your son-in-law better than I do."

"Not so, not so—you've known him from the egg—you know all his whereabouts and belongings—you were school-fellows, you are cousins—you've seen him behind the scenes; whereas here he's been on company manners; 'twas you introduced him to Lucy; and I tell you roundly, that if you knew him to be addicted to play—"

"Indeed, sir, I didn't——"

"If you knew it, I say, and yet put the artless girl in the way of his fascinations—I don't thank you for the introduction—can't forgive you for it."

As Mr. Oldworth returned home that evening, he saw a church-door open, and went in. It was empty, though there

were voices in the vestry. Finding his way to the railing of the communion-table, he laid his throbbing head against it, then prostrated himself entirely before the unseen Presence whose forgiveness and support he supplicated with sighs that could not be uttered.

He was startled from his posture of self-abasement by persons leaving the vestry, and heard a well-known voice. Bellarmine was kindly dismissing a poor woman; and looking round, he exclaimed—

“Why, Joe! are you here? I did not notice you among our small congregation. You have been waiting for me, I suppose. Come with me to my lodgings, and let us have a good talk over our bread and cheese. Raining, is it, my good woman? It will not kill a fly; and besides, I have an umbrella.”

"*You* have none," said Mr. Oldworth, to the poor, thinly-clad widow, who stood at the threshold. "Here is mine—you can leave it at Mr. Bellarmine's for me, in the morning."

"Joe, that was an act of mercy," said Bellarmine, taking his arm, and holding his umbrella over both. "I have been administering oil and wine to her soul, but it did not occur to me to save her poor old body from a wetting."

"I am glad to have been permitted the humble office. You undertook what was more important to her."

"Well, the poor creature was in a piteous case. A youth, her only son, fell into bad courses, and has at length made away with himself. Living in a remote part of Yorkshire, and he having for some time neglected to answer her

letters, she was ignorant for a long time of his miserable end. At length a presentiment, a foreboding of mischief—a dream, she tells me—made her lock up her cottage, start for London on foot, get a lift now and then in a waggon, and make her way, tediously and painfully, to the house of his master, Lord Harry Bellair. There she heard the truth.”

“ Ah ! ” exclaimed Mr. Oldworth, with strong pity.

“ It almost killed her. She fainted dead away. When she came to, she found herself in the housekeeper’s room. They made her drink a glass of wine; took thought for her body, but had no medicine for her soul.”

“ Poor creature ! ”

“ They gathered the lad’s few things together, and gave them to the mother, to

whom they were precious relics, gave or lent her a few shillings, I think, for her return journey in the waggon, directed her to its starting-place, and got quit of her. But the poor woman was taken ill at the inn. I happened to hear of it and had her removed to a decent lodging. Miss Pomeroy heard of her from me, and visited her, like an angel as she is, till she got well. And now, the money is returned, with thanks, to Lord Harry's housekeeper, and the widow is to start on her journey to-morrow, well provided, of course. She could not go, she said, without thanking me; nothing could exceed her gratitude, except her sorrow for her son. Finding where I was to preach this evening, she came to speak to me in the vestry; but meanwhile—here we are," said Bellarmine, knocking at the door of his lodging, and

running upstairs directly it was opened, to make a rousing fire. "Welcome, old Joe! Sit you here and make yourself comfortable ;" which was managed very speedily.

"Go on with what you were telling me," said Mr. Oldworth. "Meanwhile"——

"Meanwhile, there was the service, you know, and the sermon. You know what I said."

"No, I don't; I regret to say; for I did not even know you were preaching."

"Aye? Then how came you to be in church?"

"Seeing the door ajar, I turned in."

"To look about you? How curious! You could not see much, so poorly as it was lighted: 'tis almost the smallest, dirtiest, and I think, the very ugliest church in London. What do you think?"

"To say the truth, I did not much observe it."

"No? And yet you dropped in out of curiosity? Singular!"

"I have heard that, on the Continent, the church-doors are continually ajar, so that any one may drop in when so minded."

"Aye, and a very good plan too, for the poor benighted creatures who have yet to learn that God dwelleth not in temples made with hands—not exclusively, that is. He is in church as everywhere else, but no more."

"Still, within precincts specially set apart for prayer and praise, where there is an atmosphere of piety, as it were, accumulated during successive generations, the soul, always so difficult to raise above the vile things of earth, may find helps to meet its God."



“As for the atmosphere of an old city church,” said Bellarmine, after a pause, “I must say I always find it particularly musty; owing in a great measure, I think, to the intra-mural interments. And I believe the tainted air has a good deal to do with the heavy heads and hearts of those who breathe it. But as for the gist of what you say—to an imaginative mind, you know—there’s a good deal in it; as there is sure to be in whatever you do say. And so you—I understand. You needn’t tell me you turned in to commune with your own heart and be still.”

“Only the worst is, it will not be still.”

“Where is the sore place?”

“Ah, that is the very thing I can’t tell you!”

“All right. The heart knows its own bitterness, and a stranger intermeddleth not with it—only I’m no stranger. I’m not an advocate for auricular confession myself. I, who speak out everything I do! The Romish church has so dreadfully abused it; and I rather think the best way is to carry *every* burthen to the Friend who sticketh closer than a brother. Still, we sometimes feel dreadfully in need of a human hand to give the burthen a hoist, if but that we *may* carry it to that Friend and cast it his feet; only, if we just looked up and asked Him—or asked Him even without being able to look up—He would do that for us too.”

“Tom, your words are balm to my heart. No wonder they were so to the poor widow.”

“Ah, that poor widow! Not knowing

her to be present, what should be my subject of all others, but Judas going out and hanging himself! I pointed out pretty forcibly, I believe, that he only made matters worse thereby. I noticed a stifled sob. I remarked that perhaps he was hardly himself when he did it—that at all events it showed great abhorrence of his crime—perhaps much as all the world has hated him ever since, he hated himself yet more. He did not go and spend the thirty pieces of silver in drink—nor in gambling (more sobs), but cast the bag of money from him as an unclean thing—he that had been so fond of bearing the money-bag, and had stolen from it! See what it came to! At last he got a bag of money all his own—and purchased by what? By a crime so enormous that even *he* loathed the purchase money, and cast it

in the faces of those who gave it, and went and hanged himself! How much better if he had gone and cast *himself* at the feet of Him who forgave the thief on the cross! There! I'm preaching my sermon all over again to you," said Tom, excitedly. "I can't cool down all at once. You see, I put my heart in it."

"And so, went to the heart," said Mr. Joseph. "Do go on."

"D'ye like it? The poor widow came to me all in tears afterwards. 'Oh, sir, what do you think has become of my son?' 'That belongs to the secret things of the Lord, our God. We know His mercies are unlimited; we don't know the state of your son's brain. Had the last words of the thief on the cross been only audible to our Saviour, we might have classed him among the reprobate. God

seeth not as man seeth. The book is closed; we cannot read the page; his decree is known only to Himself. He says "What is that to thee? Follow thou Me." Follow Him then, my dear woman, and I trust that your last song of praise will be, "Surely goodness and mercy have followed me all the days of my life; and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord for ever." A Roman Catholic would wear the stones with her knees, macerate her body with fasting, tear her flesh with the scourge, to liberate her son from an imagined purgatory. We know that there is no purgatory, and that vain repetitions are not exacted from us—only the prayer of the broken and contrite heart.' It was a difficult thing, you see, to salve the wound; I had to go about it and about it; but she was comforted at last; by the

Holy Spirit, not by me. The case was beyond me."

"Was Miss Pomeroy in church?"

"Oh no, she's down at Twickenham."

## CHAPTER IX.

OUT OF SIGHT; NOT OUT OF MIND.

“What is the world to them?  
Its pomp, its pleasures, and its nonsense all?”

NEXT day, Tom came to Mr. Oldworth, shining like the sun.

“Joe! Miss Pomeroy *was* in church last night! (Here’s your umbrella). She came up, like an angel as she is, to see the last of our old goody; and, hearing from her where I was going to preach, came to church with her maid.”

“I rejoice at that.”

“Oh, I’m so thankful. For, not knowing her to be there, and having no fear of

man or woman before my eyes, I spoke right out, with no sinister or by-ends; and went straight to her heart."

"How glad I am!"

"To-day is her birthday, my dear friend! her twenty-first birthday; and how do you think she has signalized it? By giving me herself. She takes me as I stand; without private fortune, without preferment, without expectations. She says she would rather be mine on three hundred a year (which is just what we can make out) than give herself to a duke with a coach-and-six."

"Happy Bellarmine!"

"I believe you, sir. We go down to a curacy in the north, where one pound will go as far as two or three; and the world will lose sight of us for ever!"

All of which came to pass. Since Miss



Pomeroy chose to throw herself away, as her friends called it, in this romantic manner, there was no one to hinder it, now that she was of age.

The marriage soon took place, quite quietly; Mr. Oldworth was one of the wedding guests, and the most sympathizing and cordial of them all.

When we are unselfish, we really find happiness in the happiness of our friends. Did he find happiness, then, in that of Mr. and Mrs. Levitt? Ah, that was a sore point. In the first place, it was a matter of rivalry; in the next, he had come too late to the conclusion that Levitt was unworthy of his prize and undervalued it.

It was an anxious question whether Lucy would be happy. Her father was unhappy and querulous already; and he

became absolutely indignant with Levitt when a tailor's bill was sent in to him, which he should have paid before marriage. He passionately declared he would send him no more remittances. "And then, sir, he'll be compelled to bring her home."

But Levitt wrote to say his wife's health would not permit her to travel just now; and then "the father softened, though the governor was fixed." He sent Lucy two hundred pounds for her own private purse; but of course her husband had the best part of it.

"Yes, Joe, she's so infatuated with him, that she's happy—at least, she has made believe to be, till this time, but her spirits seem flagging now. She speaks of being tired of sight-seeing; and says, 'if we should ever meet again!' Meet again?"

why, to be sure we shall! If I thought otherwise, I should never have another happy moment."

Mr. Oldworth grieved to see that his health was really being undermined by constant fretting. One day he was summoned to him very suddenly.

Mr. Tolhurst had had an apoplectic fit. He had been bled heavily, and was recovering, but took a very low-spirited view of himself. "I'm going, Joe. I know I shan't get over this. You must write to her, my good fellow."

"Had I not better write to Levitt, sir?"

"No, no! I tell you no. He'd blurt it out in his light way and kill her on the spot. It will go nigh to kill my Lucy as it is, so you must write in my name, you

know, and then she'll know I am alive. She'll see, though, 't isn't my writing. Take pen, ink, and paper, will you? Begin 'My dearest Child!'

" 'My dearest Child,—You'll see, by the writing, that I'm not quite well to-day; so Oldworth has kindly offered to write for me.' That's a fib, though."

"I'm most happy to offer, my dear sir. You only forestalled me."

"Yes, yes; it may stand. 'I hope you got the two hundred pounds, dearest Lucy, which was for your sole and separate use; so mind, you've no right to do otherwise with it. You may do with it as you like, only not give it away to one particular person' "——

"Do you think it well, sir, to say that? Probably Mrs. Levitt would have more pleasure in giving it that way than any

other. At any rate her pleasure would be greater if unfettered."

"Never you mind that. The gift is mine, and I may say what I like. 'Hereafter all that I have will be yours, my Lucy: and it may not be so very long first; but it is safely tied up, to be a heritage for your boy, my dear, if you have one, when he comes of age; and meanwhile you are to have the interest.' That was well thought of, Joe," said Mr. Tolhurst, "my lawyer put it into my head: otherwise, you see, Levitt might have run through it all. Oh, he's a sad fellow, and so specious! How came you to be so taken up with him, and taken in with him? Because he's so specious, of course. Poor Joe! you'd have been the better mate for Lucy."

Mr. Oldworth could not bear such

observations as this; nor could he bear writing such letters; and yet, after remonstrating strongly against some of the things that were dictated to him, he had to write the letter, and to post it too—which Levitt would have cleverly evaded in his place.

Levitt wrote a very wrathy answer directed to Mr. Oldworth. He had fortunately opened his wife's letter—"Oh, the meanness!" ejaculated Mr. Oldworth)—recognizing Joe's writing, and wondering what he could have to say to her. Thus she was spared the shock. It was evident the old gentleman was much worse than he said, or probably, than he thought; and his faculties seemed a good deal obfuscated, or he never could have dictated such a letter to *his only child*—indeed, it hardly bore marks of being his dictation,

and, but for an expression here and there in the old style, he would have thought the letter a hoax, a flam, from beginning to end. He must say he did not feel grateful to Joe for writing it. He might have softened it as he wrote, so as to make it fit for Lucy's eye, which now it really was not. He should not show it to her, nor any in the same vein, as it would be to her serious detriment. She was fond of the old man even to foolishness, and she was fond of Levitt to distraction, and for her father and husband to fall out about paltry money questions, would literally kill her, he thought. At present they were enjoying themselves very well. He should open all Lucy's letters henceforward, as a precaution; and he would thank Joe for a few confidential lines, marked "private," telling him the true state of the old

gentleman's health. He seemed to him a little touched in the head. In that case, you know, allowances must be made.

Mr. Oldworth was occasionally liable to violent headaches ; and he had one after reading this letter. Never mind, business must be attended to. And when he had finished his day's work, he went down to Chiswick, as he continually did now, to beguile the long evening to the forlorn father. It was a heavy task ; a sorrowful task ; but he did not shrink from it on that account. What he did shrink from, was having to write any more letters to Lucy, that would only be read by Levitt. In course of time, this task was imposed on him ; he put it off ; but Mr. Tolhurst would not be evaded. Mr. Oldworth more pointedly begged to be excused. Levitt



knew his hand, and would be hurt at his writing to his wife.

“Jealous, hey?” said Mr. Tolhurst. “But the first letter explained all that—told her you were only my amanuensis.”

“Only, on such private matters, sir, it would hardly be delicate.”

“Can’t see it. Don’t you go to interfere between me and my daughter, and tell me what is delicate and what is not. We are not on terms of punctilio. Lucy knows me a good deal better than you do. Do you ever hear from Levitt?”

“Very seldom.”

“But sometimes?”

“Yes, sometimes.”

“When did you hear from him last?”

Reluctantly he answered, “The day before yesterday.”

"Oho, and you never told me of it!  
Can't call that very open or kind."

"It was a business letter, sir."

"About money?"

"Partly."

"Had my letter—the one you wrote  
for me—arrived?"

"Yes."

"Why hasn't Lucy answered it?"

Mr. Oldworth was strongly tempted to make a lame, *i.e.*, a false excuse. But he said, "Levitt inadvertently opened it, and out of consideration for her health, did not give it her for fear of agitating her."

Mr. Tolhurst's face grew purple. "Do you tell me," cried he, in a voice trembling with emotion, "that my letters to my child are tampered with? that Levitt reads them and never gives them to her?"

"Dear sir, this agitation will hurt you."

"A fig for this agitation! What else could be the result? If I drop down dead he'll only be glad. Joseph, give me pen and ink. I'll write to him myself."

His hand trembled so that he could not dip the pen.

"Just fill my pen for me, my dear fellow. What a blot! Hold the paper steady, will you? My eyes are misty, I think. Perhaps you'll just guide my hand a little, like when I was a little boy. Ha, ha! second childhood, Joe. 'Levitt, you—you—villain,' " trembled on his lips and on his pen, but he swooned in Mr. Joseph's arms.

Hitherto Mr. Oldworth had left his cousin's inquiries unanswered; but now, as soon as his old friend was cared for and

placed in bed, he wrote a few strong lines in his own name, calculated to touch Levitt's heart if he had one. He told him that Mr. Tolhurst had had a dangerous seizure, which affection for Lucy had made him conceal the extent of; but that now he lay in a critical state, and it was highly expedient that his daughter, as soon as she was able to travel, should come to him.

Levitt was shocked and sobered for the time by this letter. He said that Lucy's expected trial was now over; she was the mother of a fine little boy; he had ventured to break to her the news of her father's illness, which had overcome her a good deal, though he had softened it as much as he could. As soon as she was equal to the journey he should bring her home.

Mr. Oldworth's eyes moistened as he read this: he looked at the unconscious father and thought how sad it was that he would be hardly able to recognize his daughter, or to enjoy seeing his little grandson.

The needful interval passed slowly. Mr. Tolhurst's old housekeeper was a good nurse, so that his helpless state was well cared for. His mind was almost gone now; he seemed dull, but not unhappy; would watch a kitten playing with a ball with childish interest; seldom spoke except in monosyllables; but was well pleased when Mr. Oldworth read from the large family Bible, the look of which seemed familiar to him. Whether he could comprehend one sentence in a hundred was problematical; but his face always wore a reverential composure. In reading thus

to him, Mr. Oldworth likewise comforted and strengthened himself.

One evening, on his return home, he found a letter from his aunt awaiting him, summoning him to what was really the death-scene of Mrs. Flambeau. He reached her just in time for the last; it was quite an euthanasia; she brightened up with a heavenly radiance for a few minutes, smiled on them with peace unutterable, and was borne to her reward.

Tears came to the daughter's relief at last. Mr. Oldworth led her away. "Oh, how lonely I shall now be without her!" said she, piteously.

He said, "Let my home be henceforth yours."

And so, as soon as it could be arranged, he took her to his own dwelling—that spacious old city mansion that had so long

been without a lady's care. Thoughtless of self in making this arrangement, he secured thereby a very great addition to his comfort and happiness. In course of time it became a cheerful home with numerous young relatives, his guests at holiday time, growing up around him.

His first sight of Lucy after her marriage, was beside her father's easy-chair, with a baby on her arm. As years went on, she became the mother of several children. Mr. Oldworth cared for their best interests, and for their material interests too. He was old Mr. Tolhurst's executor, and discharged his trust admirably.

Levitt got hold of all the ready money he could, year after year, but could not touch the principal, on which account he hesitated not to call himself very badly

used. "Such a want of confidence, you know, Joe. I could not have believed him such a curmudgeon."

Lucy's health gave way, and she was ordered to Lisbon. Levitt was only too happy to go abroad again. This was how the children came to be chiefly under Mr. Oldworth's care, though their parents were alive. Under his training and that of Miss Flambeau, it is no wonder that they became charming young people, a little old-fashioned.

He was almost as wedded to city life, as little addicted to travelling, as Charles Lamb. But one memorable journey he made to Yorkshire, to visit Bellarmine and his wife, years after their marriage. Never was anything so Arcadian as their life—at least, as moderns think of Arcadia. There is a paper in a periodical of the last cen-



ture setting forth "How an elegant little family may live charitably and within bounds on fifty pounds a year." Bellarmine and his wife would seem to have studied this sketch with considerable attention; for they certainly reproduced almost a fac-simile of it, only on a larger income. But then, that was because Arabella had an annuity of two hundred pounds—the curacy brought only seventy pounds a year; and as "the rector of South Green carried his wife from London to Yorkshire with a neat two hundred and fifty guineas in his pocket," there was no such great disparity between his means and Bellarmine's first start after all. At all events, when Mr. Oldworth read the paper (to which Tom directed his attention) to his aunt on his return home, he could verify or assimilate every circum-

stance, except the bacon and greens ; for Mrs. Bellarmine's dairy and poultry-yard enabled her to supply her table more elegantly. There was the trout-stream which supplied them with many a dish of fish—the orchard, with its rosy fruit—the pasture-ground, for two horses and two cows—the bee-hives, the rabbit hutches—and, within doors, well-stocked presses and book shelves, a violin and a guitar. Nor did there lack the “pretty girl, the image of her mother,” or “the jolly dog of six years old, addicted to mischief, but who would cry at an interesting story by the hour together.” The neat maid-servant, modest and active, was an adept in every kind of woman's work ; for why ? her mistress had carefully trained her from twelve years of age. By the poor they were beloved ; by the rich esteemed

1

and respected. The days were scarcely long enough for their varied employments ; their evening recreations were reading, music, and conversation. In fact, Tom was so supremely happy that he assured his friend, if he were offered the richest see in England he would refuse it ; and as Mr. Oldworth took his last look of the vine-covered parsonage, with its tiny diamond-paned casements glittering in the evening sun, he thought, "Who could wonder at that man if he refused a bishopric ?"

## CHAPTER X.

### THE BETTER PART.

*"See how the world its votaries rewards."*

MARY waited for a letter from Dalmayne till the restlessness of suspense began to yield to cold despair. Homeward-bound vessels had brought letters for others, but none for her.

*"Yet she did not lament with loud allew,  
As women wont, but with deep sighs, and singulfs few."*

She tried to convince herself that their characters would never have accorded; that she had loved an imaginary Dal-

mayne, not the real man : but this brought no comfort.

A remark in a book casually opened led her to a train of deep thought. It was to this effect : That there is some one state of character and plan of action, the very best possible under all the circumstances, that will please God the most, and give us the most satisfaction to look back upon at the hour of death. She earnestly desired to know what this plan of action was in her case ; and thought, if she could find it out, she had resolution enough to adopt it. But poor Mary was all at sea, without compass or rudder. Her plan of action with regard to Dalmayne seemed inaction : she had written many a letter to him that she had afterwards felt it would do no good to send. It would be both undignified and useless to seek explana-

tions with him when he did not want things explained. What remained for her to do, then, in other quarters? Her father's motto was "*Vogue la galère*;" he wanted nothing but to be rowed pleasantly along the stream, while he lounged at his ease on the cushions. Laura had her own friends and occupations, and was in good health and spirits. Who remained for her to minister to, but Lord Harry? She could see a gradual declension in him that he appeared unaware of himself; and again the desire was faintly rekindled that Mrs. Forsyth had set alight, to be of real benefit to him. But she did not in the least see her way to it. Her readings, sometimes intermitted, were continued with tolerable punctuality; but how poor and profitless they were! He was keen enough to perceive she attached a sense of

usefulness to them, and therefore encouraged her to persist; but unless her book was merely of amusement, he thought his own thoughts while she read, enjoying the attention of a pretty young woman all the same; and if, by chance, there came some serious passage, he capped it with some question so utterly irrelevant that it showed he had not given it the least attention.

Mary was provoked at this; she thought it a slight to herself; and then, perhaps, she stayed away for a couple of days, and then next time she received such delicate flatteries, that it was not in woman—not in *her*—to refuse the graceful homage.

One day he had been saying particularly pretty things to her, dangerously fostering self-conceit; when, on reaching

home, she found awaiting her a letter from Dalmayne. Oh, what a leap her heart gave! One touch of love dissolved all the spells of Comus. She locked herself in her room, to devour every word; and what a letter it proved! *Not* the first;—a previous one had never reached her; and he was racked with suspicion, mad with jealousy, stung at being forgotten. He was very angry with her, and with himself for not being able to refrain from writing to her; and he upbraided her for not writing to him, and besought a thousand pardons for writing such bitter things to her, when grief and blood ill-tempered vexed him.

After all, there was some sweetness in this, though at first she had been shocked and overwhelmed. It was a thousand times better than thinking herself com-



pletely forgotten. A ship was just going to sail—she would write to him at once—explain all, forgive all, ask to be forgiven.

. She was writing very fast, when some one tapped at her door.

“I’m busy; you can’t come in.”

“You are wanted, ma’am.”

“I’m busy.”

“A messenger, ma’am, from Lord Harry.”

“I’m engaged. Tell Miss Laura.”

When our minds are over-full, and we are unseasonably interrupted, sometimes we substitute one word for another. Mary continued rapidly writing and was quite unaware that instead of “and indeed, my dear Dalmayne,” she wrote “indeed, my dear Lord Harry.” Had she had the opportunity of quietly re-perusing her

letter, this would have caused her to re-write it. Unfortunately, she was prevented.

Laura tried the door.

"Do leave me alone for a little while, Laura!"

"Mary! what shall we do? Lord Harry has had another seizure; papa is out; Sorel has sent urgently to us."

"How tiresome!" muttered Mary, almost devoid of humanity to Lord Harry at that moment. She opened the door in great tribulation. "Laura, come in; do pity me. I've heard from Dalmayne at last; a previous letter from him has never reached me. He is beside himself at not hearing from me. I am writing as fast as ever I can, to save the mail. What can I do?"

"I am very sorry for you indeed,"

said Laura. "Then I will go to Lord Harry, and papa must follow me as soon as he can be found. Dr. Somerville and Lady Juliana are already sent for—the poor old man will scarcely recover this time, I should think."

Mary's thoughts were all scattered; she made a futile attempt to recover them; her letter was long enough, she thought (it covered the paper); she wound it up, and was going to run it over, when, "Mary! Mary!" was shouted by her father in a stentorian voice that would be answered.

"Coming, papa! coming directly."

"Mary, come with me, and take a last sight of our old friend."

"Give me but ten minutes."

"In ten minutes he may be gone. Come at once, my dear."

Mary, in desperation, folded, sealed, and directed her letter; gave it to Richard, with strict orders to post it at once, and then obeyed her father's summons.

When they arrived, even Captain Beaufort allowed there was nothing for them to do. He sent his daughters back; and remained himself to await the event.

The event was temporary and partial recovery. Lord Harry came to himself, was very calm and quiet, very obedient to his physician, very gentle to Sorel. When the Beauforts came, he thanked them with looks rather than words. They were very attentive to him; the Captain offered to sit up with him, if it would be of the least comfort or use.

"None, my good sir, thank you. Sorel can do everything."

And Sorel had to do everything, night after night, very much as if he were a machine, requiring neither food nor rest nor fresh air. He bore it very uncomplainingly.

When Lord Harry got a little better, he sent for his lawyer and made some alterations or additions to his will. This seemed all the preparation he thought necessary for a passage into an unseen world. After this, he was very placid, like a man who had done all he had to do. A day seldom passed without the Beauforts spending a short time with him. Everybody seemed to think it to be expected of them; that they would be failing in their duty if they omitted it. Captain Beaufort certainly felt so; he had just now

a strong sense of gratitude for favours to come.

One day, neither of the girls went to him. He was restless and a little peevish in consequence. To beguile the time, he told Sorel to bring him a certain casket of rings, pins, and other trinkets, and to spread them before him : amusing himself with their glitter.

"When Prince Potemkin was out of sorts," observed he, "he would have his various orders spread before him on a little table covered with black velvet." He seemed considering them one after another ; perhaps allotting them, in his mind, to different persons. Presently he said, "Not one of these diamonds is of as pure a water as the one I gave you, Sorel."

"Do you think so, my lord ? "

"Think so? I am sure of it. Go and bring yours, and let us compare them."

Sorel was reluctantly going, but stopped, and said, in some confusion, "My lord, I beg your pardon, but I have it not just now by me."

"Have it not by you, sirrah? Do you mean you have sold it?"

"No, my lord, not exactly; but—but"——

"Speak out, and don't stammer. What have you done with it?"

"I—I—committed a little imprudence with it."

Not a word spoke Lord Harry. "Played it away," was his verdict; but he said not a word, which was more than Sorel expected; not a word, then or thereafter.

One night he was wakeful and weary. Sorel was reading by the light of a lamp carefully screened from his master's eyes.

"Sorel," said he, suddenly, "are you reading the Bible?"

"The Bible? no, my lord," said Sorel, startled.

"What are you reading?"

"I was running through the new play, my lord, to keep myself awake."

"Ho! *Have* you a Bible, Sorel?"

"Do you want me to read to you, my lord? I will get one from Mrs. Mullet."

"I expressed no such desire. Have you one?"

"No, my lord,"

Not another word from Lord Harry.

Next day his lawyer brought him some papers to sign, and had a little conversation with him about his affairs.



He said, "Oh, by the way, my lord, it occurred to me there was a little omission the other day. Perhaps I may be officious——"

"Never mind, my good sir. What was it?"

"I thought you probably meant to remember . . . so-and-so."

"No," he replied, quite placidly, "I've remembered him already; and besides, he has a very good salary."

The lawyer was rather sorry he had meddled with what did not belong to him. He said afterwards among his intimates, it was very gratifying and edifying to see a man who had cut such a figure in the great world, ebbing away so gently and equably.

A time of greater trial was just beginning, but it did not last long. Had the

Beauforts been aware of it, they would have been more unremitting in their attention. Had they been so, Sorel might have kept more faithfully to his post, and adhered more undeviatingly to his accustomed respect and vigilance. He was getting rather worn now, and sometimes lost his temper.

When Mary next saw Lord Harry, he told her, almost with tears, that he had been neglected. She could not suppose he alluded to his servant, and understood him to be complaining of herself and her sister. She was hurt, and said a little in self-defence. He said nothing more; but as she left him, it struck her that he looked very, very sad. That look haunted her afterwards, and occasioned self-reproach.

The next day the house was closed. All the houses on the green were closed, out

of respect to one who had been, in some sort, their sovereign ; for Lord Harry was dead.

Nobody could give any account of his last moments. Sorel represented him to have gone off quite peacefully ; but it could not be satisfactorily ascertained that Sorel was actually present at the last moment ; and certainly no one else was.

The Beauforts were unaffectedly sorry. It was a great shock to them, though they had so long expected it. Mary and Laura found that they had really cared for him very much : they recalled to one another his many kindnesses, and shed genuine tears. Captain Beaufort told everybody he had the satisfaction of thinking he had been a great comfort to him to the last. There were newspaper summaries of his

character and conduct; some of them entirely panegyrics; others as uncompromising as if dictated by Minos and Radamanthus. There was a very grand funeral.

Afterwards the will was read. There were kind remembrances to a great many friends, very judiciously apportioned; kindest of all, to the Beauforts; without drawing any envy and animadversion on them by disproportioned munificence, but expressing gratitude to them for having cheered his declining years, which they most certainly had.

Captain Beaufort hardly knew what to think of it. He was disappointed, but did not show it much; and soon made it his business to remind his friends how disinterested he and his girls had always been.

Lady Bell and Lady Kitty found nothing they could particularly cavil at.

Sorel was not mentioned. All were surprised—more surprised than he showed himself, though he looked very pale. There was a general impression that he had been rather unhandsomely overlooked. Nobody knew whether he thought so himself.

And so this was the end of Lord Harry. The girls wore mourning for him, and increasingly felt pride and complacence in having been so closely connected with him. It was just when this feeling was strongest that Mary was deeply wounded by a letter from Dalmayne, upbraiding her for having her head still so full of her old admirer that instead of writing "My dear Dalmayne," she had addressed him as "My dear Lord Harry." Mary was confounded:

she could not believe it of herself, till she recalled the circumstances under which her letter had been written. Then, being angry with herself, she proceeded to be angry with him, telling him that his reproofs read strangely when his innocent, involuntary object of suspicion was dead; and boldly expressing her regret for him and dwelling on his kindness.

Mary felt relieved when she had thus asserted herself. But if her temper was relieved, her conscience was disturbed, when the letter which she knew and meant should give pain, was beyond recall.

“Oh, what a temper is mine,” thought she, despairingly. “And his is yet worse; so that we never shall get on together.”

There the correspondence ceased. She was more unhappy than ever, and deserved considerable praise for showing it so little.

But her manner was becoming hard and gloomy—there was no one she now cared to please, except her father and Laura; and she could not please herself.

With sadness rather than pleasure, she prepared to accompany them abroad again. She afterwards thought she had had a presentiment something was to happen.

That something was Captain Beaufort's death. He had a very short illness—was hardly supposed in danger before he became insensible. That was a great shock to the daughters. It troubled depths in Mary's heart that she knew not of. Love disappointments seemed very trivial in comparison. There is scarcely anything that can equal the loss of a father. And the girls had a certain noble instinct which made them vividly and permanently retain the remembrance of all the good

traits of those whom they had loved and lost, while all that was unworthy and unamiable faded out of sight.

"Only time can heal," say some. "Only religion can heal," much more sensibly say others. Mary now felt a great void in her heart, which only God could fill. Happily for her, Mrs. Forsyth was at hand, and also the good clergyman who had been summoned unavailingly to Captain Beaufort's death-bed. These two were privileged to be of the greatest benefit and comfort to the sisters.

As Laura's nature was neither as deep as Mary's, nor had been as deeply stirred, religious truth did not affect her as deeply; but yet she, too, began to apprehend a more excellent way than that she had hitherto followed.

When, after a lengthened stay on the



Continent, the sisters returned to London and reappeared in society, people were sensible of a change in them, without being able to say what it was. They were older, but they were as lovely as ever. Care had certainly not thinned them, nor clouded their brows; they were as conversant with the public affairs and best literature of the day as ever; were as intelligent in conversation and as ready at repartee; but both of them, Mary especially, seemed, in the midst of it all, to maintain a steadfast gaze on something beyond and above them. Theirs were not "leaden looks that loved the ground," but "looks commercing with the skies;" and, now and then, a few words dropped from one or the other, told of an inner spiritual life; but this was very seldom, for it was then considered bad taste, except among a

certain sect, to make any reference to the world to come.

One day, Mary went to call on her dear friend, Mrs. Forsyth. On entering her pretty morning-room, she found, not her friend, but Dalmayne! She had hardly time to utter an exclamation, when she found herself in his arms.

"Yes, here I am," said he, at length; "and now reproach me as much as you will."

"Reproach you? What for?"

"Nay, Mary, you ought to know best," said he, smiling. "Your last letter was full of nothing but reproaches, except a very little bit of . . . something that gave me as much encouragement for hope as a drowning man finds in a straw. So, my three years' exile being ended, I thought I would come and judge for myself whether

there really were anything for a rational man to anchor on or not; and now we'll go into explanations as long and as many as you like."

"Oh, I want no explanations," said she joyfully.

"Most certainly, then, I don't," said Dalmayne. "My poor Mary," looking at her with wistful tenderness, "you have had some sad losses since we parted."

"They have truly been sad, Dalmayne; but, thank God, 'Laura and I have drawn good out of evil, and found blessings in disguise. You may say the same," said she, smiling, "for there is no one now left for you to be jealous of—to claim even a daughter's affection."

"And will you forsake your gay friends to return with me?—for I have been re-appointed."

“Forsake Laura?”

“Laura must go with us.”

“Oh, thank you, Dalmayne!” She gave him her hand.

There are some who would be so exacting as to ask for another half-page. It is better that each should supply it for himself. This is not a true story, though very like one.

THE END.





1

2







